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ISSUE FOUR

A physician says, "Circumcision is unnecessary and barbaric. It cripples children, physically and mentally, for their whole lives."



AN ANTIDOTE TO THE TIMIDITY AND CORRUPTION OF THE AMERICAN PRESS

fact

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The Unkindest Cut of All

By John M. Foley, M.D.

A West Virginia physician asserts that circumcision, in addition to crippling and killing many infants, may cause reduced sexual pleasure, homosexuality, and antisemitism

On July 20, 1964, the *Medical Tribune* published a letter from a Baltimore physician who called for the compulsory circumcision of all men seeking to get married. Indeed, he went on to demand Federal legislation requiring the circumcision of every male infant within the first 8 days of life.

Now, just why anyone would want circumcision made compulsory may seem puzzling. After all, circumcision is already a routine operation in this country. What need for legislation when 98% of all newborn boys, before leaving hospitals, are circumcised? When *Sexology Magazine* can maintain that circumcision has become a "status symbol," and when a physician can lament that "one has to lop it off along with the Joneses"? When just about everyone, including physicians who should know better, has bought the myth that circumcision in some mysterious way prevents certain forms of cancer?

One answer, of course, is that if circumcision were made compulsory, the circumciser would be protected whenever he happens to cripple or kill the little boy he operates on—a "complication" that is not so very uncommon. Another answer, I think, must be sought in the darker regions of the human mind, because circumcision is simply an unmitigated fraud. It is nothing but wanton and unnecessary mutilation. The annual 2 million assembly-line circumcisions in this country are a monument to the gullibility and

stupidity of the American public.

For 60 years, a powerful and articulate minority in our profession has tried to enforce a tabu against any objective discussion of the merits or demerits of circumcision. Over in Great Britain the climate of opinion is decidedly against routine circumcision, but here the operation has become a sacrament: To question its value has become all but unthinkable. The medical literature is virtually closed except to those who drool over the operation's alleged advantages.

Still, once in a while dissident voices manage to be heard. William Keith C. Morgan, M.D., of the University of Maryland School of Medicine has written in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that "98 times out of 100 there is no valid indication for this mutilation other than religion. . . . Why is the operation of circumcision practiced? One might as well attempt to explain the rites of voodoo!" Peter Van Zante, M.D., of Iowa writes in the *Medical Tribune*: "Circumcision of a helpless child is a crime." Elsewhere he has said: "Circumcision is cruel and mutilating and actually should be outlawed." In 1920, a British physician named G.S. Thompson, who had once circumcised himself, later concluded that circumcision was nothing more nor less than "a barbarous and unnecessary mutilation" (*British Medical Journal*, 1920).

At this point, the reader may do well to ex-

amine his own conscience. If he has been circumcised, either ritually or surgically, and is chagrined that anyone would dare question the advisability of circumcising every single male infant, let him read no further. He has about as much chance of being objective as he has of growing himself a new foreskin.

* * *

Efforts to justify circumcision have been made since the very beginnings of history. The desire to mutilate came first; the "reasons" came later, and run the gamut from spiritual through cultural, esthetic, and finally medical.

This process of rationalization has culminated in the supposed relationship between the husband's foreskin and cancer of the genitals—one of the greatest hoaxes in the history of medicine. The theory is that the uncircumcised penis, because it may generate a waxy substance called smegma, can produce cancer of the penis and cancer of the cervix (neck of the womb).

The only evidence in support of this theory is that Jewish men and Jewish women rarely get cancer of their sexual organs.

But granting that genital cancer is rare among Jews, circumcision is almost certainly not the reason. As Dr. Van Zante has observed, Jews in general seem to be more resistant to certain diseases than gentiles and to have a greater longevity: Genetic and cultural factors are probably at work. Thus, Paul Sherlock, M.D., of the Cornell University Medical College is convinced that ulcerative colitis and regional enteritis are *more* common among Jews because these diseases have a genetic basis (*Medical Tribune*, 3/9/66).

That the lower incidence of penile and cervical cancer in Jews is genetic or cultural seems perfectly clear when one examines the incidence of genital cancer in other ethnic groups.

In Finland, fewer than one man in a thousand is circumcised, yet the incidence of penile cancer in Finnish men is less than in Americans. Finnish women also have less cancer of the cervix than American women.

In Java, the Moslems are ritually circumcised, yet Java has one of the highest incidences of cancer of the penis in the world.

In Ethiopia, Coptic women have a high

incidence of cervical cancer, although 90% of Coptic men are circumcised in infancy.

In India, the Parsees are not circumcised. Yet the Parsees have one of the lowest incidences of penile and cervical cancer in the world.

Further evidence that circumcision is not linked with cancer comes from tests of human smegma. In 1942, the National Cancer Institute conducted careful experiments and found that smegma had no carcinogenic effect whatsoever. This test was duplicated in 1963 on a more extensive scale by Dr. D.G. Reddy and others, with the same conclusions. Negative results have also been obtained in a number of other experiments ("Circumcision in Infancy," Charles Weiss, M.D., *Clinical Pediatrics*, 1964). In addition, if smegma *were* carcinogenic, the use of a contraceptive sheath would lower the incidence of cervical cancer in women. Studies have shown that it doesn't (*Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*, 1962).

Finally, control groups of circumcised and uncircumcised gentiles have been studied, and cervical cancer has not been correlated with the presence or absence of the foreskin in male sexual partners (*American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 1958).

Yet even if circumcision and penile cancer *were* connected, this might not be justification enough to warrant circumcision. As Dr. Morgan points out, "... this is an uncommon form of cancer and generally has a fairly good prognosis. Appendicitis causes many more deaths every year in the United States than does cancer of the penis, but nobody yet recommends routine appendectomy." Dr. Van Zante gives a more graphic analogy: "Why not amputate all female breasts to avoid mammary cancer?"

Well, does circumcision at least prevent venereal disease? Thirty years ago, routine circumcision was being urged for just this reason. Today, our circumcised teen-agers have the highest V.D. rates in history. Dr. Morgan adds: "Any U.S. or British physician with experience in North Africa or the Levant [where circumcision is common] knows that the Middle East has a venereal disease rate which is second to none."

Does circumcision prevent phimosis, the

constriction of the foreskin? The answer is yes, but the fact is that true phimosis, as every physician knows, is extremely rare.

Does circumcision lead to a more hygienic penis? The answer, again, is yes. Except that the ears also collect dirt. Should they also be lopped off? "Soap and water," writes Dr. Morgan, "work wonders with the body's other orifices and appendages, and there would seem to be no reason to doubt their efficacy with respect to the foreskin." And while it is true that genital cancer may someday be linked with lack of cleanliness, Dr. Van Zante points out: "The male should be taught cleanliness, and if he follows this, I doubt that the noncircumcised male will contribute any greater percentage of penile and cervical cancer than the circumcised male."

Dr. Morgan's conclusion is the only conclusion possible: "There are a variety of reasons advanced in favor of circumcision, most of which are unconvincing when critically examined."

* * *

Since circumcision has practically nothing to recommend it, an important question is: Why has it become a routine operation? A few physicians go so far as to suggest that money may have something to do with it. Dr. Van Zante asks rhetorically: "Don't you think that the doctor delivering the baby thinks more about the \$10 or \$15 surgical fee he'll get than the possible after-effects?"

My own view is: Circumcision provides a convenient and socially acceptable outlet for the perverted component of the circumciser's libido. I have had personal experience with the psychopathology that underlies the wish to circumcise. The pitiful wails of the suffering infant are all too often the background for lewd and obscene commentary by the obstetrician to his audience of nurses. Several years ago I saw an infant born with multiple deformities. He could not live more than a few months at most, but to add to his miseries, this unfortunate bit of humanity had to undergo a thorough circumcision.

I have seen two medical students fight over the privilege of doing circumcisions on the newborn, although these same students showed neither interest in nor aptitude for opening boils or

doing other surgical tasks.

In 1951, I witnessed an autopsy on an infant who had died from an infected circumcision—a death rendered even more tragic because the mother had tried to persuade the obstetrician to spare her infant this ordeal.

Dr. Alexander Schaffer, a noted pediatrician, tells with horror of a case in which an infant was being delivered as a frank breech (buttocks first). Before delivering the baby, and just as the penis came into view, the obstetrician seized it and circumcised it. That obstetrician, I would say, may be capable. He may be an all-round fine fellow. But sexually I say he is a monster. And I say that one of the reasons why circumcision is so common in this country stems from the sadism of the crypto-pervert.

My viewpoint is not very novel, though, for psychiatrists have long been agreed that circumcision is basically a punitive act. According to Dr. Karl Menninger, for instance, the original and basic purpose of circumcision was to serve as a symbol of castration, and the practice was initiated by fathers—to punish their sons for whatever incestuous feelings they might have for their mothers.

Another explanation for the prevalence of circumcision: latent female antagonism toward the penis. To quote Dr. Morgan: "Perhaps not the least of the reasons why American mothers seem to endorse the operation with such enthusiasm is the fact that it is one way an intensely matriarchal society can permanently influence the physical characteristics of its males." I myself do not doubt that among the biggest boosters of circumcision are neurotic females, whose unhappy sex lives prompt them to injure a man where he feels it most.

One could go further and consider the obstetrician: Perhaps the same stimulus that drove him into the traditionally feminine role of midwife is also responsible for his attack upon the penis. However, in all fairness, it should be pointed out that these male midwives know very little about the penis and, of all physicians, are surely the least competent to decide about circumcision. Besides, the obstetrician rarely sees the hemorrhage, the infection, and the deformi-

ties that sometimes result from his handiwork—these are the lot of the emergency-room staff, the pediatrician, the urologist, and the plastic surgeon.

Others who can be counted on the side of the circumcisers are:

A. Certain Christian clergymen, who are quick to point out that Jesus Christ submitted to circumcision. (They are not so quick to point out that Jesus also submitted to crucifixion.) The Roman Catholic Church solemnly celebrates the Feast of the Circumcision on January 1.

B. Homosexuals, who—according to psychiatrists—are in dire fear of being castrated. No doubt it pleases them when others, instead of themselves, submit to an operation that is similar.

C. Antisemitic Jews, ashamed of their mark and eager to make it universal.

D. All men, including physicians, who have already been circumcised. To paraphrase an expression, they suffer from “foreskin envy.” Cut off a man’s tonsils and it does not affect his feelings toward his neighbor’s tonsils, but cut off his foreskin and his neighbor’s foreskin becomes the object of envy and hatred. The circumcised have always behaved as if their circumcision were a stigma of inferiority. Jew, Moor, and Turk forced circumcision on servants, slaves, and whole nations of conquered people.

Because the motivations of the foreskin-phobes are so irrational, these people are hard to combat. The introduction of routine circumcision as a “medical” measure at the turn of the century aroused vigorous opposition within the profession. Dr. Warren Stone Bickham, an eminent surgeon, declared that circumcision was a disgrace and a discredit to the surgeon responsible. Nonetheless by 1920 the opposition had dwindled, and the fanatical circumcisers were in possession of the field. The opponents of circumcision failed because they did not understand the motives of the circumcisers and therefore could not grapple with them.

* * *

So far, I have considered the “medical benefits” of circumcision and explored the possible motives of those who favor circumcision. Now I

want to consider the harmful consequences of the operation.

The circumcision of a newborn boy is a spectacle so appalling and revolting in its cruelty that, on their first encounter with the ordeal, many robust medical students faint. The infant is tied down securely to a circumcision board, with his genitals exposed. Next, the entire foreskin and much of the penile skin is pulled through a clamp, and as the clamp’s screw is tightened, the skin is crushed off. As much as 80% of the total penile skin is removed. In this country no anesthetic is ever used. The infant struggles and screams, and often vomits and defecates, before lapsing into unconsciousness.

As a result of circumcision, some infants die. Countless thousands are doomed to become sexual cripples. In 1958, a 4-year-old boy underwent surgery for an undescended testicle. The surgeon, noticing that the child still had his foreskin, just couldn’t pass up this tidbit. The circumcision failed to heal, and 5 days later the penis sloughed off. The parents sued for \$150,000 and settled for \$80,000. In a similar case last year, the parents asked for \$4,500,000. These are two cases that have come to public attention only because of lawsuits. In England and Wales, however, it is known that an average of 16 children died annually from 1942 to 1947 as a direct result of circumcision.

Dr. Van Zante has this to say: “Proponents of circumcision do not mention any of the ill-effects of circumcision. Duf and Ware state, ‘Major losses of penile skin are fairly common as a complication of circumcision.’ The child may get a meatal ulcer. The sensitive, exposed glans [the head of the penis] sometimes becomes infected with diaper rash.... Occasionally a babe, especially of hemophilic parents, bleeds to death.”

Dr. Weiss mentions these other possible complications: sepsis, eczema of the glans and meatus, meatal stenosis, surgical adhesions, interference with nutrition, edema of local tissues, seepage of blood with resulting anemia, and injuries of the glans or scrotal skin.

Dr. John Van Duyn of Georgia, a plastic surgeon, has complained that often circumcisions are performed by young interns, and after

they perform a few circumcisions, they are left unsupervised. "Unless the operator is competent and care is exercised," he writes, "there is always the possibility of damage from poor technique."

Dr. Van Duyn goes on: "A short time ago, I was called upon to split-graft the penis of a newborn where too much skin had been inadvertently removed, and in reporting this case found that this error had occurred in a number of other instances.

"In another case, involving the incorrect use of a circumcision clamp in an infant, the glans was found gangrenous on removal of the clamp and was subsequently lost.

"There is also the distinct danger from hemorrhage, especially if the baby is placed in a prone position and supervision is minimal. In a near fatality from this cause, of which I have firsthand knowledge . . . a growing puddle of blood beneath the baby was not discovered for a considerable time."

* * *

Another hazard of circumcision is the possible diminution of sexual pleasure. Only the circumcised refer to the foreskin as a "useless appendage." The intact penis is an instrument admirably suited for its natural purpose—which is *not* simply to serve as a waterspout.

During a boy's growth, the foreskin protects the sensitive glans. Normally the surface of the glans is composed of a smooth, glistening membrane only a few cells in thickness. The surface cells are alive, and naked nerve-endings are distributed among these cells. After circumcision, when the glans is exposed to soiled diapers and rough clothing, this membrane becomes 10 times thicker, and the free nerve-endings disappear. The surface becomes covered with an adherent layer of dead cells, rough, dry, and insensitive.

For the mature man, the foreskin provides a covering during erection, when the organ increases in bulk from six to eight times. In coitus, it rolls back to expose the sensitive glans. And especially when the vagina is snug, this elastic covering promotes sexual satisfaction: It enables the penis to penetrate smoothly and without friction.

A number of students have confirmed that

the uncircumcised man has a sexual advantage over the circumcised. For instance, Martin L. Edwards Sr., M.D., a Texas physician, writes: "I have counselled with many married men who are circumcised, and this alone has been a great drawback between man and wife."

On the other hand, Dr. William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson, in their recent book *Human Sexual Response*, call it a "phallic fallacy" to believe that the man who is circumcised is at a sexual disadvantage. But a close reading of their book makes their conclusion seem erroneous.

To begin with, they maintain that it is a widespread belief that the uncircumcised man has better ejaculatory control than the man who is circumcised—because his glans is less sensitive than the circumcised man's. Medical opinion, actually, is just the opposite: The man with his original foreskin has a glans that is particularly sensitive.

In their book they also state: "A limited number of the male study-subject population was exposed to a brief clinical experiment designed to prove the false premise of excessive sensitivity of the circumcised glans." Experiments on 35 men in each category demonstrated no "clinically significant difference" in sensitivity of the glans.

Let me suggest that when an experiment "is designed to prove the false premise" of some belief or other, even if it uses a "limited" number of subjects in a "brief" experiment, its outcome is really not in doubt.

Aside from its lack of objectivity, the basic fault of the experiment Dr. Masters and Mrs. Johnson describe is that no mention is made of when the circumcised men were circumcised. The fact is that if circumcision is delayed until adult life, degenerative changes are minimal. The glans does not suffer such a profound loss of sensitivity, and the penis gets a "tailored fit."

But even if there is no sexual advantage to having one's original foreskin, and even were complications not so numerous, there would still be other dangers attendant upon circumcision—psychological dangers.

The reason that anesthetics are never used on infants undergoing circumcision is that—in

addition to the possible danger—it has been taken for granted that infants are not sensitive to pain. Recent experiments, and contemporary opinion, however, flatly contradict this.

Charles Weiss, M.D., of the Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, states: "Experimental psychologists and physiologists who employed the techniques of pin-pricking or applied medical electric shock to different parts of the body have demonstrated that sensitivity in neonates increases sharply within the first four days of life."

A Leipzig pediatrician, Prof. A. Peiper, states: "I have not the slightest doubt that a newborn infant is definitely sensitive to pain."

A London physician, A. W. Wilkinson, M.D., states: "I do not think there is any doubt that infants in the first week of life are sensitive to pain because, when inadequately anesthetized, they respond very sharply to an incision with a knife."

Since infants apparently do feel the pain of circumcision, no wonder that a number of psychiatrists—including Freud—have held that circumcision must leave severe scars on the personality. Recently Dr. René A. Spitz observed: "I find it difficult to believe that circumcision, as practiced in our hospitals, would not represent stress and shock of some kind. Nobody who has witnessed the way these infants are operated on without anesthesia, the infant screaming in manifest pain, can reasonably deny that such treatment is likely to leave traces of some kind on the personality. This is one of the cruelties the medical profession thoughtlessly inflicts on infants, just because these cannot tell what they suffer."

One possible result of circumcision is impotence: Impotence seems to be frequent in circumcised men, but rare among the uncircumcised. Problem-masturbation is also as common among the circumcised as it is rare among the uncircumcised—the exposed glans explains it.

Then too, homosexuality also seems to be related to circumcision. First to report this was Melitta Schmideberg (*Psychoanalytic Review*, 1948), who treated two patients, homosexuals, who had been circumcised. In one of them, "The resentment and fear of his mother associated

with circumcision was an important factor in the development of his homosexuality." More recently, a study was made of admissions to a large Naval hospital. Of all admissions, 32% had been circumcised. Of all admissions with the diagnosis of "overt homosexuality," 100% had been circumcised. Before he died, Dr. Alfred Kinsey intended to investigate the relationship between circumcision and homosexuality.

Unfortunately, one cannot be sure about all the possible psychological illnesses that can be traced back to circumcision. As Dr. Spitz has observed, "Characteristically, no research seems ever to have been done on developmental and personality differences between a group of circumcised and one of uncircumcised infants."

* * *

Finally, in addition to the physical and psychological harm done by circumcision, there is the societal harm.

It is a truism in psychoanalytic literature that circumcision is a major cause of antisemitism.

Circumcision, in the unconscious, is confused with castration. Thus, in *Man Against Himself*, Dr. Menninger writes: "I could cite many illustrations from psychiatric practice to show how, in the unconscious, circumcision and castration are equated. Because the fear of cutting in connection with the genitals is so widespread, and apparently so basic in the formation of character, any surgery in connection with the genitals is apt to be associated with strong emotional feeling which psychoanalysts, on the basis of their daily experiences with the language of the unconscious, ascribe to the 'castration threat,' i.e., the fear that the genitals are to be irremediably injured."

How do the Jews fit in? To impressionable Christian children, circumcision is considered mutilation of the genitals—and Jews are identified with the practice. Freud himself thought that the castration complex was "the deepest unconscious root of antisemitism; for even in the nursery little boys hear that a Jew has something cut off his penis."

Not surprisingly, in-depth interviews with antisemites have revealed that many of them have

a deep fear of being castrated. Some 100 anti-semitic students studied by Else Frenkel-Brunswick and R. Nevitt Sanford (*Anti-Semitism: A Social Disease*, 1946) betrayed "unconscious inferiority feelings centering mainly about the castration complex." To them, the Jews, the symbol of the circumciser-castrator, automatically became an object of hate and fear. Dr. Nathan W. Ackerman, in *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder* (1950), cites a patient who told him: "I can't understand why so many gentiles are circumcised. That's what the Jews did to America. Their mission is to circumcise every single Christian in the country." Asked by a *Fact* staffer if he had been circumcised, Nazi leader George Lincoln Rockwell became upset: "I won't answer any such degrading question as that." Rockwell evinced his ready confusion of circumcision and castration by adding: "As far as the Jews are concerned, it isn't thorough enough. They should cut about 5 inches more off."

Many psychiatrists, Jews among them, are therefore eager that Jews give up the practice of circumcision. C.G. Schoenfeld, writing in the *Psychoanalytic Review* (1966), acknowledges that because circumcision is "a fundamental tenet of Judaism... Jews can hardly be expected to renounce circumcision readily—or indeed at all." But he goes on:

Nevertheless, the tenets of religions do change (consider, for example, the results of the recent Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church). Hence, it is conceivable that knowing that circumcision helps to engender antisemitism will have an effect upon Jews, and as a result, upon Judaism—especially if Jews also familiarize themselves with certain anthropological and psychoanalytic studies and discoveries regarding circumcision.

For one thing, Jews ought to be aware that circumcision, far from being a uniquely Jewish custom, was once a common practice in ancient Egypt...and, in addition, that circumcision is to this very day a common practice among many of the world's primitive peoples.

* * *

To recapitulate: Circumcision has few if any medical benefits. Any link between circumcision and the prevention of genital cancer is at best unproved. Circumcision is not only unnecessary but barbaric. It can cripple children, both physically and mentally, for their whole

lives. And as for the motives behind circumcision, psychiatrists are agreed that they are irrational and punitive.

What can be done?

One possible course is to wait until the physicians in this country become well-informed on the subject. However, a fascinating survey conducted a few years ago (*American Journal of Diseases of Children*, 1963) of 126 physicians in Ohio revealed that 69% favored routine circumcision, 20% opposed it, and 11% were of the opinion that circumcision was not a "medical" decision and should rest with the parents.

The men who conducted the survey—Robert A. Shaw and W.O. Robertson, M.D.—were quick to point out that none of the reasons given were firmly established, and many were imaginary. "The results," they concluded, "cast reasonable doubt on the belief that the decision—'pro' or 'con'—is reached in any scientific manner."

The authors also were skeptical that the medical men will, in the near future, make themselves better informed on the subject. "One would hope," they write, "the situation might change in the next century—but do not bet on it!"

Another survey the authors conducted was of parents who let their children be circumcised. What were their reasons? I quote a few: "Thought it was a *mandatory* hospital procedure"; "Because it 'looks better'"; "Thought all males were circumcised"; "Everyone in our family is circumcised"; "I thought it was a law"; and "The doctor just did it."

Still, at the present time I think that it is parents who are our best hope. It is they who can campaign for a more open discussion of the problem. It is they who can prevent their sons from being circumcised. And it is, therefore, to parents that I appeal:

Let us be honest and fair enough to let our sons grow up to decide for themselves if they want to exchange their foreskins for the very dubious advantages of circumcision.

And I would like to remind parents of that perceptive remark of the great historian Henry Thomas Buckle: "Every great reform which has been effected has consisted, not in doing something new, but in undoing something old."



How Louella Mae Burns Just Missed Becoming a Famous Writer

By Robert Byrne

According to its ads, the Famous Writers School accepts only applicants who have potential. Naturally, the school would never encourage a hopeless dud like Louella Mae Burns. Or would it?

The Famous Writers School, advertisements for which appear regularly in the *Saturday Review*, *Ramparts*, *Harper's*, and other magazines, has been quite a success since it started 5 years ago. Today it has about 20,000 mail-order students, who may pay up to \$625 for the privilege, and an annual gross income in the millions. The Famous Writers themselves, according to *Business Week*, receive about \$4400 a year for their services: (1) traveling to Westport, Connecticut, occasionally to consult with the school's instructors, and (2) permitting the use of their names for publicity—Bennett Cerf, Faith Baldwin, Bergen Evans, Bruce Catton, Mignon G. Eberhart, John Caples, J.D. Ratcliff, Mark Wiseman, Max Shulman, Rudolf Flesch, Red Smith, and Rod Serling.

It was in the *Saturday Review* that my wife and I saw an advertisement for the Famous Writers School over a year ago. My wife happens to be a concert pianist and I happen to be the editor of a trade journal, and though both of us have literary ambitions, we were really not seriously interested in enrolling in the Famous Writers School. But seeing that advertisement gave my wife a mischievous idea.

To us, there was something terribly sad in seeing established writers permit the use of their names in such a rankly commercial manner. Besides, the school's promotional campaign seemed intent on spreading the notion that practically

anybody, with hard work and a good correspondence course, can join the exciting world of the highly-paid professional writer. The one proviso the school made was that would-be writers have talent. Thus, according to the *Saturday Review* ad, the school weeded out the talentless from the talented by means of its Aptitude Test.

That test was what gave my wife her idea. She proposed to send for it and fill it out with outrageously nincompoopish answers.

I haughtily informed her that she was wasting her time, and that any organization represented by such respectable people would never encourage incompetents. But wives can be stubborn and she went ahead anyway.

And so my wife created a potential Famous Writer. Her name was Louella Mae Burns, and she was 62 years old and a widow. Mrs. Burns, using our address in San Francisco, promptly wrote away for the Aptitude Test.

The test arrived on March 4, along with a letter that stated: "If we fail to find that you have writing ability worth developing, we'll tell you quite frankly." The test itself was all of 8 pages long. It began with a section entitled YOUR PERSONAL BACKGROUND. Mrs. Burns—in longhand—answered all the questions, revealing that she had been a housewife for 42 years, had never been to college, had three children, had been interested in writing for 6 months, and read the *Reader's*

Digest. Her favorite authors were Kathleen Norris, Margaret Mitchell, and William Shakespeare. The last question was, What do you hope to achieve as a writer? Mrs. Burns's reply:

I would like to share some of my really interesting experiences that I've had quite a lot of and I think with changing some names of people and places that I could write a really interesting novel or book or maybe some short stories. I think this would be a richly rewarding experience for me and fill some of the lonely hours that I find weigh heavy some days ever since my dear Fred departed this world.

The Aptitude Test was divided into six sections. The first listed five sentences, all of which contained long-winded phrases that the student was supposed to condense. Example: "It isn't difficult to add more length to your novel." The right answer, of course, is to *lengthen*. Alas, Mrs. Burns's answer was to *add length to*. For *as soon as*, she substituted *soon as*—instead of *when*. For *so as to*, she substituted *so to*—instead of *to*. For *prepare an outline that covers*, she substituted *prepare an outline for*—instead of *outline*.

Section Two listed five famous characters. After each name were six adjectives, and the student was asked to choose the three that were appropriate. For example, after "Sherlock Holmes" the adjectives "daring," "deductive," and "urbane" should have been checked. Mrs. Burns checked "daring," "deductive," and "corpulent." She also thought that Scarlett O'Hara was "aloof" and TV cowboy Matt Dillon was "cruel."

Next, a vocabulary test. Five words were listed, then easy multiple-choice definitions. Mrs. Burns thought that *parch* meant *dissect*, *interpose* meant *change*, and *vestige* meant *payment*.

Section 4 involved choosing which of two paragraphs was better written. There was a 50-50 chance, and Mrs. Burns guessed correctly.

Next came the challenge of supplying words for the blanks in a paragraph of fiction. Here is the paragraph:

It was a _____ evening in late spring and the apartment windows were open to the _____ sounds of the city's roar; but the girl standing in the _____ of the living room and nervously twisting a plain gold band around her _____ finger, heard only _____ sounds. One was the _____ throb of the automatic elevator in the corridor outside and the other was the _____ chime of the mantel

clock as its _____ marked 7:30.

Mrs. Burns came up with these words: *gorgeous, fascinating, middle, delicate, some, heart, bell, and chimes*.

The final section of the test was its heart: "In not more than 150 words, tell of an experience you have had at some time in your life." This stopped my wife for a few days. If her contribution were too ridiculous, her fraud would be all too clear. If it weren't fairly ridiculous, nothing would be proved. In fact, she took so much time that, finally, a friendly note of encouragement arrived from Westport. Properly stimulated, my wife penned the following essay:

I think I can truthfully say to the best of my knowledge that the following is truly the most arresting experience I have ever undergone. My husband, Fred, and I, had only been married but a short time and one beautiful cloudless day in springtime we went a-strolling down Central Avenue in East Orange, New Jersey. All of a sudden there was no longer just Fred and I but a whole flock of people who started merging along the sidewalk. Fred and I did think this was a little funny, but then the day was so gorgeous with fluffy white clouds splattering the sky that we thought well everybody is just out enjoying the gorgeous day as we were. When out of the blue came a honking and cars and motorcycles and policemen. It was really something! Everybody started shouting and waving and we finally essayed to see the reason of all this. In a sleek black limousine we saw real close Mr. Calvin Coolidge, the President Himself! He was smiling and waving and then he looked right at us, at Fred and I, at which point he smiled again. I just stood there so awed and dumbstruck that it was like a dream. It was truly an unforgettable experience and one which I shall surely long remember.

* * *

After the completed test was mailed off, my wife and I waited eagerly for its return. And not long after, the test—scored and commented upon—came back.

The grade on the first section (eliminating superfluous words) was D. The second section's grade was C (apparently Matt Dillon *is* "cruel" and not "kindly," and my wife got that right). The third section (vocabulary) was graded D.

The fourth section, choosing the better of two paragraphs, was marked A, and the grader apparently couldn't contain his elation: "Good work, Mrs. Burns," he had scribbled.

Section 5—supplying key words—earned Mrs. Burns a C- and this comment: "Your words *do* have consistency in feeling & meaning but the girl would be more likely to hear irritating sounds in her nervous state."

Section 6—the essay on Calvin Coolidge—was marked C-. Wrote the grader: "You have an interesting story here, but wish you had written in an easier less stilted manner."

Well, had Mrs. Burns passed or failed? To us, it seemed obvious that she should not be encouraged to embark on a long, rather costly writing course in order to be a professional free-lance writer. The Famous Writers School owed it to her to inform her that, unfortunately, the school was overbooked for the season and all seasons to come.

* * *

On the last page of the Aptitude Test, Mrs. Burns was given an over-all grade of C+ and informed that she qualified for the Famous Writers School. According to the school's chart, C was "above average." A D would have been "fair." And a few days later, on April 15, the following letter arrived from Donald T. Clark, registrar of the Famous Writers School:

Dear Sir:

As a subscriber to *Fact*, may I compliment you on the excellent job done to date.

Mason Rose, Chancellor
Pacific Institute for Advanced Studies
Los Angeles, Calif.

Sirs:

Your May-June *Fact* is the best you ever published; in fact, one of the best magazine issues I've ever read.

Curtis Casewit
Member, Society of Magazine Writers
Denver, Colorado

Editors:

I herewith extend my subscription because there is a need for a publication in which independent commentators may find a forum.

Paul W. Aschner, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Great Neck, N.Y.

Gentlemen:

I subscribe to your magazine. And I have only one thing to say: WONDERFUL!

Father Constantine J. Balomenos, Pastor
Annunciation Hellenic Orthodox Church
Decatur, Illinois

ous Writers School:

Dear Mrs. Burns:

One of my pleasantest duties is to write to aspiring writers who have scored well on our Aptitude Test. Congratulations! . . . You couldn't consider breaking into writing at a better time than today. . . .

Of course, I don't mean to suggest that there is anything wrong with offering a course of writing by mail, or even to suggest that the instruction given at the Famous Writers School may not be the best thing of its kind ever concocted. But I do think it is clear that the school is willing to accept feebly-qualified applicants, and to cajole them into enrolling with descriptions of the luxurious lives led by a group of the best-paid writers in the country. And I think that this is the cruelest kind of huckstering—the kind that feeds on daydreams and loneliness. The Twelve Famous Money Makers ought to be ashamed of themselves.

If the Famous Writers School really wanted to be helpful to would-be writers, it would give more prominence to a rule laid down by one of the 12 members of its Guiding Faculty. Max Shulman, when asked a few years ago for advice for young writers, suggested simply: "Marry money."

The Editors:

It's redundant to say that you're publishing one of the most provocative, and bravest, periodicals on the market.

Alex Haley
Member, Society of Magazine Writers
Rome, New York

To the Articles Editor:

Unfortunately I'm too tied up lecturing to classes here...to take on other activities. True, I'd like to have done an article for a magazine that's doing as needed a job as yours is doing, and that seems to be doing it so well as yours does....

Herman J. Muller
/Winner of Nobel Prize, 1946/
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Sirs:

Clearly, yours is the most impressive publication in America today. It is also the most "American" publication I have ever read.

In the future, when I wish to determine the measure of a man, or woman, I'll just inquire as to their reaction to the latest issue of *FACT*.

Sp/4 Bayard C. Hillway, News Director
Air Forces Network
Verdun, France



A Cook's Tour of Travel Agents

By Onofrio Bruni

Go ahead and *ask* your travel agent—about his hidden mark-up, about getting an itemized bill, about justifiable refunds. But don't be surprised if he won't tell you

No one knows for sure, but it's estimated that 5 million Americans consult travel agents every year to make arrangements for their trips outside the country. In 1965, American tourists spent \$1.3 billion on overseas transportation, and 75% of that total was handled through travel agents. Once outside the country, tourists spent \$2.4 billion on lodgings, meals, local transportation, etc., and about a third of *that* total passed through the hands of the travel agents. On all these transactions, the agents got a certain percentage of the cut. So, obviously, these men are making a heck of a lot of money.

There's nothing wrong with making lots of loot, of course, and many travel agents perform a genuine service for their clients. On the other hand, many other travel agencies are also incompetent, unscrupulous, and irresponsible. And one reason they can get away with it is that the American public, by and large, is stupefyingly ignorant about travel agents. Those people who visit travel bureaus very possibly know less about what they are buying, and how much they are paying for it, than about any other retail product or service in the United States.

Now, it's true that many travel agencies, as we shall see, *want* to keep their clients ignorant. But another cause of this widespread public ignorance is the fact that the whole travel industry has grown so big so quickly—on account of great-

er wealth among Americans, increased leisure time, the quickened speed of travel, and so on. Five times as many Americans went abroad last year as in 1950. In 1940, the country had about 750 travel agents. In 1950, about 1100. Today there are over 7000 travel agencies—one in every city and almost every town in the U.S.A. And one result of this sudden and tremendous upsurge in traveling and travel agents is that the general public simply hasn't had a chance to get informed about travel agents—who they are, what they do, and how they get paid.

Who *are* they? The truth is that almost anyone can set himself up as a travel agent. To go into the business, an agent must:

- post a \$10,000 bond (at a cost of about \$150) in case he defaults on any travel tickets he sells;
- get the location of his office approved;
- have no record of business malpractice and give the impression of having solid finances;
- testify to his ability to make out a travel ticket.

Once he has done this, he will probably be "accredited" by the Air Transport Conference (so he can sell tickets on most domestic lines) and the International Air Transport Association (for most international airlines and ships).

Yet he can also hang out his shingle—without any authorization whatsoever—and peddle

hotel reservations, bus and rail tickets, and even a few airline tickets on such carriers as Icelandic Airways and Trans-Caribbean Airlines (which don't belong to the I.A.T.A.) and on the Flying Tiger Line and World Airways (which don't belong to the A.T.C.). Four hundred travel agents do just that.

My point is that travel agents do *not* have to be tested on their ability to read travel schedules, their knowledge of the hotels they send their clients to, the tours they may book, or any other area involved in selling travel arrangements. All a travel agent has to do is seem well-off and honest and know how to buy a travel ticket. He doesn't have to know the Louvre from the Crazy Horse Saloon or the Grand Hotel from an American Youth Hostel.

Partly because of these lax standards, some travel agents have been guilty of grossly sordid business practices. Some have sold airplane tickets that have been stolen or forged. Others have done what one New York agency did—sold round-trip airplane tickets for Buenos Aires to a young couple, canceled the return tickets, pocketed the money, and vamoosed, leaving the couple stranded in South America. Some travel agents are simply incompetent, and book tours on unsafe vessels—like the *Yarmouth Castle*, which caught fire in November, 1965, and sank off the coast of Nassau, with a loss of 89 lives. (A Congressional bill calling for strict safety inspections of foreign cruise ships was vigorously opposed by organized travel agents.) Not a few travel agents declare they have made arrangements at a particular hotel for their clients; their clients later discover the hotel can't accommodate them, and they must search out other arrangements; and when they return to the States, these poor people have a murderous time trying to collect a refund.

In fact, the difficulty of getting refunds is one of the commonest complaints people make against travel agents—according to the Better Business Bureau in Chicago, it is *the* commonest. Travel agents urge everyone to make arrangements as early as possible, of course, but if a patron has a death in the family, or gets sick and has to be hospitalized, the travel agent may turn

into Scrooge himself. Though the agent sometimes can easily dispose of the reservations, he may decide to pocket whatever he wants, supposedly to pay for the time he spent making the arrangements. When it comes to refunds, other agents are even more obstinate and even more patently dishonest. There are still some tourists trying to collect refunds for excursions on pleasure boats in the Caribbean—cruises the boats canceled in 1964!

Dishonest and incompetent travel agents first became a problem many years ago, which is why the American Society of Travel Agents was formed—to set some standards. To join the A.S.T.A., a travel agent has to have 3 years' apprenticeship in the travel business and get 50% of his income from the sale of travel (he can't be a dilettante). It sounds good. But less than 30% of all American travel agents are members of the A.S.T.A. And even if more belonged, the truth is that A.S.T.A.'s code of ethics is not very restrictive and not very well enforced—more about this later.

In sum, one way John Doe may be ignorant about travel agents is in not knowing he may be dealing with an out-and-out shyster, instead of a knowledgeable, reputable businessman.

* * *

Another way John Doe may be ignorant is in not knowing exactly how travel agents make their profits.

Now, the typical travel agency is a single-office affair run by the proprietor, his wife, and one or two employees. (American Express and Thomas Cook, the global giants, are really exceptions.) The average agency grosses between \$500,000 and \$1 million a year, and may pull down \$10,000 to \$15,000 in profits, after taxes, excluding the owners' salaries. (One important fringe benefit: Everyone connected with an agency can travel anywhere at one-fourth the usual fare.)

Most people believe—correctly—that the travel agent gets commissions: Whenever a travel agent registers a sale for a hotel, an airline, a tour operator, a car-rental agency, or a theater, he gets a certain kickback. He gets 5% of the cost of a ticket for domestic air travel, 7% on inter-

national travel (by air or steamship), and 10% on all hotel fees, railroad costs, and other land arrangements. If an airplane ticket is part of a package of land and transportation arrangements, that too is subject to a 10% commission.

No wonder travel agents are so successful! Their clients think that they're not being charged anything. If the client didn't go to a travel agency, he would have to bother making transportation and lodging arrangements himself, directly, and be charged exactly the same amount. The only difference is that, presumably, the travel agent wouldn't get his cut. It sounds wonderful. But it just ain't so.

Who's responsible for spreading this fiction? Magazines are, for one.

Sunset Magazine has reported that travel agents get all their income from commissions—"That is how the agent is paid; *you* pay no more than you would if you bought direct. . . . For serving in these ways as your consultant, he does not charge a fee."

Redbook Magazine qualifies this a bit; "Almost all the cost of this service is borne by the [airplane or steamship] carrier, resort or hotel that gets your business. If you pay anything extra, it is usually confined to incidental costs such as out-of-pocket expenses for the agent. . . . You may even save money when compared to the cost of making arrangements for yourself."

Fortunately, a few magazines don't depend entirely on travel agents for their information, e.g., *Business Week*, which has stated clearly: "... dispel the popular notion that an agent doesn't charge. You will pay for any real service beyond routine transportation bookings."

Naturally, travel agents are also a wee bit responsible for "the popular notion that an agent doesn't charge." Some agencies always advertise their services as being provided at NO EXTRA COST. The Yellow Pages of the phone directory of any large city, under "Travel Bureaus," will yield numerous blurbs like NO EXTRA CHARGE and FREE SERVICE.

* * *

But I myself have interviewed scores of travel agents, both here and abroad, on this subject. And I have found that travel agencies, large ones

and small ones, reputable ones and disreputable ones, *almost without exception charge extra for their services.*

About 5 years ago, Irving M. Frankel, the president of the American Society of Travel Agents and the owner of a travel agency in Atlanta, recommended that members of A.S.T.A. stop insisting that their services cost nothing extra. But he concedes that his recommendation has sometimes been ignored. Have any of these recalcitrants been threatened with expulsion from A.S.T.A.? Has *any* action been taken, have *any* threats been made against them? A *Fact* reporter asked Mr. Frankel this question last fall. His answer was no.

Yet A.S.T.A. claims that it's trying to correct "the popular notion that an agent doesn't charge." Mr. Frankel asserts that an A.S.T.A. pamphlet, "The Travel Agent and You," explains that travel agents *do* get something extra for their services. I examined the pamphlet carefully, especially the section dealing with the travel agent's charges. It appears after 3 pages of type extolling the wonderful things travel agents do for clients. The section is titled: IS IT MAGIC?

"By now," the pamphlet states, "you are wondering what all this work and service will cost. Much of it is going to cost you nothing extra. Here's why.

"A travel agent's principal source of income is derived from commissions. . . . Hotel reservations are frequently made without a charge when the commissions earned will cover the cost of handling. Otherwise, it may be necessary to add an expense-of-handling charge to cover the actual costs incurred and provide a reasonable profit."

Further on the pamphlet says, "the selling price must necessarily include a fair charge above the actual costs to cover professional know-how, time consumed and overhead involved."

The truth is that travel agents, *as a rule*, charge something extra for their services. Hardly any *don't*. Has A.S.T.A. said this? It seems to me that its pamphlet is contradictory, but it inclines to the view that there's NO EXTRA COST involved. The section begins with the claim that "much" of what a travel agent does is free. Yet "it *may* be necessary" to add "an expense-of-handling

charge," whatever that is. Only the last statement, "the selling price must necessarily include . . ." faces the facts—which is simply that travel agents *do* charge extra.

* * *

Two important questions: Just how *much* does a travel agent charge extra? And do *all* travel agencies tack on the same extra cost? The answer to the second question has been provided from an experience a New Yorker and his wife had recently.

The couple were planning a trip to Europe. They asked three travel agencies to quote the cost of a 23-day tour. They specified that they wanted a double room with bath at certain hotels in Paris; Zurich and Lugano, Switzerland; and Venice and Portofino, Italy. The couple also asked for first-class rail transportation between these cities; transfer service at the railroad stations; and a guided tour of Venice. In short, they were as specific and explicit as possible.

One travel agency offered to arrange everything for \$816.

A second made the bid of \$1200.

The third wanted \$1600.

And the agency that wanted \$816 was willing to throw in sightseeing tours of Paris, Versailles, and Zurich!

Obviously, what certain agencies consider "a fair charge" to "provide a reasonable profit" varies tremendously.

I asked A.S.T.A. officials what they considered "a fair charge" to be. They declined to tell me. I then asked them what A.S.T.A.'s members usually consider "a fair charge." Again, they wouldn't tell me.

Luckily, I did get a few knowledgeable travel agents to talk, including William Denis Fugazy, president of the Fugazy Travel Bureau, which has some 20 offices in the United States and abroad. Mr. Fugazy informed me that a 10% or 15% mark-up is "not at all unusual." His own mark-up is 10% or 15%, he said, "and occasionally we get more than that." He went on to tell me that a top executive of another large travel agency boasts of getting as much as 33%, and that a big British agency sometimes tacks on a 40% mark-up.

Now, if a traveler wants to learn how much he's being charged extra, he hasn't got a chance. Even if he asks for a breakdown of his bill from a travel agency, before or after his trip, he'll probably be out of luck. Most travel agents flatly refuse to provide a detailed bill. Others may promise to provide one, but never do. Once again, most travel agents are determined that their clients remain ignorant. And once again, magazine stories based on travel-agency hand-outs are wrong: *Redbook*, for example, has said that the travel agent "gives you an itemized bill for all costs."

Even A.S.T.A.'s Mr. Frankel says: "If a client requests a breakdown of his bill, beyond transportation costs, I tell him his program is composed of many, many different segments—hotels, sightseeing, local transportation, and the like. These, I explain, are added up day by day on the basis of our own cost, to which we add our cost of doing business and a reasonable profit. I just won't give him a breakdown—and it is not customary in the industry to do so."

Yet if you go to a plumber, he will give you a bill stating the price of his labor and the cost of the material. A doctor will give you a bill telling you what an X-ray cost and the value of his time. But travel agents won't. And when I questioned a few dozen of them about this, I was surprised to find that several came up with precisely the same answer: "Look, when you order a suit, the tailor doesn't tell you the cost of the thread, does he?"

I asked a travel-agency employee in Zurich about this. Her reply: "They *tell* you about the suit and the thread, don't they?"

I asked Jack M. Slichter, traffic vice-president of the Air Transport Association of America. His reply: "A travel agent's bill is made up of incidental charges. But a suit is an *individual* item. In fact, if you were going to have a suit altered, you'd have no difficulty getting an itemized bill, for instance, to show what it cost to replace the buttons, shorten the cuffs, and for pressing."

Finally, I asked travel agent William Fugazy. He told me that he himself will provide any client with a complete breakdown of all charges, including the mark-up. "You're operating under a subterfuge if you don't," he says. "That's a lot

of bilgewater about not getting the price of the buttons when you buy a suit."

* * *

One reason some travel agents are reluctant to provide itemized bills is that it's troublesome. But for others, it keeps their clients from learning how the agency upped their bills—perhaps by peppering their itineraries with unrequested extras, like special limousine service.

A few months ago I chatted with a banker from Shreveport, Louisiana. He and his wife had traveled abroad for years, but then had sworn off travel agents forever. It seems that the banker and his wife had gone to one of the largest travel agencies in the business, and the agency had presented him with a bill—a lump sum—for his forthcoming trip. The banker demanded to know precisely what he was paying for, and asked for an itemized bill prior to sailing. Only 24 hours before he was to leave, he received the voucher.

"There were several items on that voucher that absolutely flabbergasted me," he said. "One provided for the use of a motor launch for *12 hours a day* for *3 entire days* in Venice! I canceled that as fast as I could—and then got only half my money back, and *that* only after a real hassle.

"Now," he says, "we make our own airline reservations, and let the airlines make our hotel reservations."

For my own part, when I was in Zurich last year I learned that my voucher for services in that city included, without my knowing it,

- a charge of \$3 for being handed train tickets to my next destination, tickets I picked up at the depot *across the street* from the travel agency.

- a \$2.50 hotel-reservation fee, to cover the "cost" of the travel agency's making a local phone call to the hotel.

Later I learned that a large number of agencies include "hotel reservation fees" in computing the cost of their services, even before calculating their mark-ups. Mr. Fugazy, for one, considers it unnecessary: "We can live with the 10% commission we get from hotels to cover any costs in making hotel reservations."

Indeed, the complaint lodged most fre-

quently against travel agents by their customers seems to be just this jacking up of their bills. A Better Business Bureau official in New York City told me that every year he gets scores of gripes from travelers who have kept track of the *actual* cost of the services they received—only to discover later they paid their travel agents far, far more than the actual cost.

I myself did the same thing last year when my wife and I traveled through Europe for 6 weeks. Our trip was scheduled on short notice and it involved visits to several East European countries, requiring visas. So we decided to have a large and reputable Los Angeles travel agency make most of our arrangements. At the time, we too thought the agency would be paid entirely by commissions.

Our bill was not submitted to us until just before we were to leave, and of course the bill was broken down into only two parts—transportation, and total land arrangements. We asked for more details. The agency, because of our insistence, promised to provide an itemized bill. Just as we were about to leave, we were told it still wasn't ready. But, the agency assured us, we would get one when we came back.

While we were in Europe, my wife and I kept careful notes on all our expenses—room rates, railroad fares, theater tickets, car rentals, meal coupons, sightseeing tours, and other items. It really wasn't a great deal of trouble, either, because in most of the countries we visited there were only three or four items to take into account, like hotel costs, transportation, and sightseeing. Nor was it hard to learn the actual cost of these services. Sightseeing buses normally have large placards on them announcing how much they charge. The price of an airline or railroad ticket is easily obtainable at the airline terminal or railroad depot. And room rates can be ascertained from a friendly room clerk, or by consulting a rate card (if one is posted, as it should be).

When we returned home, again we asked the travel agency to give us a breakdown of the costs. Finally, the agency came across—but it gave us a breakdown only by countries, and not by items.

So we compared the travel agency's breakdown with what we had learned the true costs

were.

In Athens, the actual cost of 4 days at the Hotel Amalia, including breakfast and a 15% service charge, plus the actual cost of a half-day's tour of Corinth, plus a cruise in the Aegean, came to \$297. The agency charged us \$315.

In Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Italy, the actual costs amounted to \$565.68. The agency, which lumped all these countries together in its breakdown, charged \$987.

In Zurich, our actual costs were \$158. The agency charged \$174.86.

In Amsterdam, the actual cost was \$121.50. The agency charged \$140.

In London, the actual cost was \$222.08. The agency charged \$273.84.

Only in Paris, where we handled our own arrangements (except for a \$10 room deposit) did the agency not up the bill.

All in all, according to our 3½-page breakdown, the actual cost of land arrangements for two people, including visas and cables, was \$1468.06.

The agency billed us for \$1929.80.

The "service charge" represented a mark-up of over 30%!

I submitted this detailed tally to the agency. The agency refused to make any comment—except to say that "wholesalers" had not provided the actual costs to the travel agency itself. (A wholesaler engages in block-booking of hotels and in creating package tours, for sale to travel agents at a lower cost.)

So I wrote to the wholesaler for Eastern Europe. Shortly afterwards, we received a reply from Mr. A. F. Canner of that firm's San Francisco office.

Mr. Canner regretted "we cannot give you more satisfaction in this matter." He continued, sarcastically, "Your breakdown indicates a great deal of time spent at the expense of your vacation time." And, predictably, Mr. Canner stated: "It is not our policy to give an item by item breakdown of costs. After all, when you buy a suit you do not expect to be given a list of the costs of the materials, the buttons, number of labor hours, transportation costs, etc."

One more point about my trip to Europe.

When my wife and I were in Zurich, our voucher called for a "superior" hotel room. When we arrived at the hotel, we were placed in a small, dark room at the back of the place. Over the weekend, we visited nearby Liechtenstein. Then we returned to the same hotel in Zurich. This time we were placed in a spacious room high in the front of the hotel, with a balcony and a beautiful view. This really *was* "superior."

Had we been entitled to this room on our first stop at the hotel?

To find out, we asked for a rate card. The desk clerk refused to give us one, insisting that rate cards were available only to travel agents (actually, they were just not available to clients of travel agents, since anyone walking in off the streets could have gotten one).

From another employee we did manage to get a rate card. We learned that there was a difference of 16 Swiss francs (\$4) in the rates between the two rooms. Now, if the second room had been better than "superior," someone would have asked us for the extra \$4. No one did.

Our conclusion was that we had actually paid the travel agency the higher price for *both* visits, but on the first visit the hotel had placed us in a less-than-"superior" room. And the hotel could get away with this switching simply because we never got an itemized bill to tell us exactly what we were paying and what we were entitled to. This switching of tourists to inferior rooms is reported to be very common.

In any case, my wife and I had paid the travel agency's entire \$1929.80 bill, including the \$461.74 "service charge." So we had no recourse. But I wish I had it to do all over again. In fact, based on my own experience and my own investigations, the advice I have for others about to travel is:

1. Consider doing it yourself. As even one travel agent told me, "If you can't afford a Cadillac, don't buy one." If you can't afford an expensive trip, try planning your own and making your own reservations. It's not nearly so difficult as it sounds, even if you're making your first journey overseas. Guidebooks by the carton are available. Also, any airline or steamship official will

make reservations for you (you're saving him the travel agent's commission). And once a hotel has written you that it has space available, and you have sent a deposit (\$15 or \$20) and a notice of your time of arrival, it's unlikely that you'll run into trouble.

2. Shop around. Of course, Mr. Frankel of A.S.T.A. advises against this: "There are just too many corners you can cut to come up with a lower price." True enough. So when shopping around, just be as specific as you can—specify how many days you'll spend in what city, what tours you want, and even name the hotel you want to visit if possible.

3. Demand to know how much of a markup, if any, the travel agency charges.

4. Demand a breakdown of the bill well in advance of your departure—find out what you're paying for.

5. Demand to know about how much of a refund you will get if you have to cancel.

6. *Complain* if you think you've been cheated. If you think you have been placed in inferior accommodations, or an agent refuses to give you a refund when a scheduled service has

been canceled, consider going to court.

* * *

Still, I just don't think that the travel-agent's customers should really *have* to be so wary and suspicious. It's about time the government stepped in to protect travelers. The Fair Trade Commission has been derelict in not insisting that travel agents truthfully "label" their merchandise—tell their customers exactly how much they are being charged extra and exactly what they are being charged for. And it's also about time the Justice Department started snooping around to see if some travel agencies are violating the anti-trust provisions of the Sherman Act. I don't think it's a mere coincidence that so few travel agencies provide detailed breakdowns of their bills—and so many tack on a service charge of 15% to 30%. Until the government acts to protect its citizens who want to travel, and save them from their own ignorance, the situation is going to get worse and worse. By 1970, it's estimated over 10 million Americans will be consulting travel agents before leaving the country.

At least in the old days, pirates *admitted* they were pirates.

Dear Mr. DeWitt Wallace:

I commend for "digestion" in your magazine "The Pleasantville Monster," in the current issue of FACT.

Arthur B. Ewig

CC: Fact Magazine

Editor:

I was chairman of the Magazine and Newspaper Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, whose report on the Reader's Digest was never published (you tell about it on p. 14).

I marvel at your article, the amazing amount of material in it. It was very worth doing.

Helen Rand Miller
San Francisco, Calif.

FACT editors:

Mr. Boroson's article about the Reader's Digest is a masterpiece. I have often wondered why I found that magazine so disgusting. Now I know.

Father Paul Kabat
Northome, Minnesota

To the Editor:

I enjoyed "The Pleasantville Monster" very much—primarily because it agreed with ideas I have already held!

William H. Bittel
Department of History
Westmar College
Le Mars, Iowa

Dear Sirs:

I could not agree with you more about the Reader's Digest, and I have run into further proof of how reactionary they are.

Doubleday's big forthcoming book for this summer, OPINION OF THE COURT by William Woolfolk, which everyone here at Doubleday thought was a natural for the Reader's Digest Book Club, was turned down by them as being "too controversial." The book is a whopping, highly readable novel about the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court Justice, who is the hero, stands up for civil rights, defends a so-called obscene book against censorship, and defends the right of a homosexual to hold a job in the Civil Service. Among the characters in the book is an associate of the hero, another Supreme Court Justice who is Jewish--and whom the author delineates in favorable and positive terms.

These random comments about the plot are enough to indicate why the book would be considered "too controversial" by bigots.

I wish I could sign this letter, but it might cost me my job.

[anonymous, on letterhead of
Doubleday & Company, Publishers
New York]

Dear Fact:

I love you, even if the Reader's Digest doesn't.

Susan Cohen
Philadelphia, Pa.



Rockefeller's Millions: The Poor People of New York

By Gary A. Youree

A former Welfare Department investigator says that people who seek financial help from the City are automatically regarded as bums, liars, and chisellers—although 96% are unable to work and many of the remainder just can't find jobs

Five years ago, soon after my 30th birthday, I arrived in New York City in my 7-year-old Studebaker. I had \$11, one suit, and a college diploma. Behind me were 3 years in the Baptist ministry, 3 years of teaching, and 2 years traveling around the South, West, and Midwest doing odd jobs. I was determined that my next job would be one where I could do something meaningful, and when I emerged from the Holland Tunnel into downtown New York City, I was really looking forward to wonderful adventures.

The next day I went to the New York State Employment office. My interviewer there riffled through his card file a couple of times, then asked apologetically, "Interested in social work?"

"I'm very much interested," I said, "but I'm probably not qualified. I haven't had many sociology courses."

He shrugged. "All you need is a college degree. Any degree."

I told him, enthusiastically, that I was his man. So he wrote me a letter of referral and told me how to get to the personnel office of the Welfare Department. As I left, he said, "This is something to hang onto until you find something better."

And so, after 2 weeks of training, I was assigned to one of New York's 24 Welfare centers, along with a dozen other trainees.

Among other things, I learned that here, in

a city of nearly 8 million, the business and cultural center of the world, 500,000 New Yorkers are so poor that they get regular stipends from the Welfare Department. Most of those on Welfare—over half—have come from out of town, usually from Puerto Rico or the deep South. They receive, on the average, \$70 a month. Eight other states, below New York in per-capita income, spend proportionately more per capita than New York does on Welfare. Yet New York is generally conceded to have the most liberal Welfare laws in the nation. We trainees were given a manual, *Policies Governing the Administration of Public Assistance*, which stated:

The primary duty of the Department of Welfare is the granting of assistance and care to persons found to be in need. . . . The objective is to restore the applicant to a condition of self-support or maintenance by relatives who are legally responsible.

In addition, the Welfare staff must determine exactly who is eligible for relief. And while people are on relief, it was our job to investigate them to make sure they were on the up-and-up. Bleeding-hearts are warned against "exaggerated solicitude" and "overwillingness to do things for the client." Authoritarians are warned: "Equally bad is a punitive attitude which rejects reasonable evidence of need. . . ." The granting of public assistance must be administered "in a sound and humane fashion."

To be honest, in my 3 years as a Welfare investigator and my 1 year in the Welfare office, I didn't see much "exaggerated solicitude." But I saw a great deal of punishment and inhumanity.

I met a supervisor who habitually referred to her clients as "bums." Almost every day I could hear her bellowing on the phone to someone who had the audacity to telephone the office. Another supervisor often expressed the opinion that, "They have only themselves to blame for their troubles." I heard an investigator refer to his caseload as "Those lousy bastards."

A lady investigator was interviewing one of her clients. I couldn't hear what he said to her, but everybody heard her scream: "Get out! *Get out or I'll kill you!*" (She has since been promoted to supervisor.)

Typical of how clients are treated is what happened to a worn-out, middle-aged prostitute. After a few minutes, the man interviewing her decided she was not eligible for Welfare. In his record book, he wrote: *Could not satisfactorily explain past management.* In despair the woman cried out, "But what am I going to *do*?" The worker got up and walked away, calling to her over his shoulder: "That's *your* problem."

Prostitutes rarely get Welfare. Single men also are usually passed over, though many apply. Most of the single men are sent to the Municipal Lodging House in the Bowery, where they get meal tickets and are placed in one of the "hotels" there. I have found that most men, in preference to a night in the Municipal Lodging House, would rather go to jail.

I was interviewing Mr. S—, a 40-year-old homosexual. He had never applied for Welfare before. A Broadway stage designer who was unemployed, he had borrowed all he could from his family and friends, then had been evicted from his apartment. He had come to our office, spoken with me, and another worker had sent him to the Municipal Lodging House.

He came back the next day, frantic. "Have you *seen* that place? It's *filthy*! And the 'hotel' they sent me to—it was a flophouse! Bedbugs . . . and those men!"

Two "lush divers" (men who climb over the partitions that separate flophouse beds) had tried

to attack him sexually.

"I may be a homosexual," Mr. S— wailed, "but I'm a *decent* person. My God! How could you people *send* me to such a place?"

Mr. S— had left the "hotel" and spent the rest of the night in a bus station.

I consulted with my supervisor. She peeked out the door to get a look at him, then decided we could get him a room and money for food because "He doesn't look like a bum."

At other times, I've known single men applying for Welfare to be *rejected* because they didn't look like bums. "Look how *clean* he is. He must be getting help from somebody. Or he's working somewhere."

In short, the decision whether someone is eligible for Welfare is often made arbitrarily. And even when someone *is* lucky enough to qualify, help may come too late.

Once I was sent out into the field to investigate an emergency case. The family involved was about to be evicted. When I arrived, a marshal had preceded me and all the family's possessions were on the sidewalk. It is, of course, illegal to block the sidewalk, so the Sanitation Department was busy throwing the family's furniture onto the back of a trash truck to be carted to a city depository.

Sitting on a milk crate in their empty apartment I spoke to the family. Their three children ran around excitedly, asking what was happening. My interview took an hour and a half, including time spent calling my office for instructions (nobody seemed to know what to do). Finally I sent the family to the office for hotel placement, giving them carfare out of my own pocket. I don't know whether they ever got their furniture back.

* * *

On the same day, I made another investigation. Mr. H— was about my age. He had a wife and three small children. Six months before, Mr. H— had been in a car accident and sustained a back injury, and since then had been unable to work. A lawsuit was in progress, but would take at least 3 years—and his lawyer would get half the award, the hospital and doctors most of the rest. For 6 months the H— family had been on

relief, and they had recently made a complaint.

I was greeted at the door with, "Who the hell are *you*?"

I showed him my identification card.

"Another investigator? You're the third in 6 months!"

Mr. H— went on to tell me that the Department of Welfare was sending him \$8 semimonthly. His apartment was almost bare of furniture—he had sold or hocked everything he could. He had also borrowed heavily. With some well-chosen words, Mr. H— asked me why he was not getting more than \$8 every half-month. It took me an hour to convince him and his wife that I was really going to do something about it. They were angry, desperate people, and they were accustomed to better times.

When I got back to the office, I discovered that the H— family had been the victims of a mix-up. It seems that Mr. H—'s first investigator thought he was getting unemployment insurance of \$50 a week, hence the small \$16-a-month stipend. But Mr. H— wasn't getting anything—he had been self-employed, and he was unable to work. So, because of an error, for 6 months Mr. H— and his family had been needlessly suffering.

* * *

The worst thing about trying to prove that you need financial help is that you are considered guilty until proven innocent. A man is ineligible until proven eligible—and the burden of proof is on him. As soon as he walks in to apply for Welfare, he is labeled a bum and a liar.

Once I interviewed a family of four in the Welfare office. This was the first time they had applied for Welfare. The father had been employed for 11 years, then his employer went out of business. The man's income had been low, and he had no savings. He brought in all the records that could possibly establish his eligibility. He provided phone numbers, which I called. They were out of food and had come to Welfare as a last resort. Both the man and his wife were embarrassed. Before the interview was over, she was in tears. Very nice people.

I went to my supervisor. I presented her with all the facts. Twice. She could find nothing amiss, except that: "I don't know—it looks too *pat* for

me." And she decided that the family would get no emergency cash until an investigator had been in their home. It was a Friday, and the family would have to wait until the following week to get food.

I told them this, and they took it quietly. I had \$4 with me, and gave them \$2. I felt as bad as they did. They were more "eligible" than anybody else I had ever interviewed.

Maybe the trouble with them was that they were too polite and understanding.

On the last day I worked for the Welfare Department, Friday, May 7, 1965, I was interviewing Mr. and Mrs. G—. The Welfare office is, incidentally, about half the size of a gymnasium, and quite as noisy. Row after row of straightbacked chairs were filled with people—about 100 of them—waiting to speak to the investigators. A long line stood at the receptionist's desk. Many of these people had arrived at 9 A.M. and would still be waiting at noon. Some would be there all day.

Mr. and Mrs. G— had nine children. While I was talking to her, a woman in the crowd suddenly jumped up and yelled: "Give me some money! Give me some Goddam money!" The woman started over to the receptionist's desk. Two Welfare patrolmen intercepted her. A call was made upstairs, and her investigator came down to talk with her and calm her down. That was all. But if she had been a man, she would probably have been hauled back into the patrolmen's little room. (Police brutality is not limited to City cops. One of our Welfare patrolmen told me he occasionally raps a client for "getting smart.")

I resumed my interview with Mr. and Mrs. G—. Mrs. G— had become increasingly hostile during the interview, and I could foresee trouble. She was making me nervous. She answered all the questions with a loud, "I've already been asked that. A hundred times. It's inna record. Don't you people read the record?"

"Mrs. G—, the Department isn't satisfied with all your answers . . ."

"Well, that's all the answers you're gonna get! I've told the truth. Those Puerto Ricans and niggers come in here and lie and they get money.

Well, I've told you the truth and I'm gonna get it too!" And so on.

The G— family had been rejected because of "Inadequate explanation of management." That is, they could not explain how they had managed to live without Welfare in the past—up to 5 years ago. People with bad memories, or people who haven't kept records, are in trouble. "Inadequate explanation" is the most frequent reason for rejection.

Where children are involved, however, Welfare help will always be granted—after a lot of harassment. Mrs. G— knew this. But the game must be played. It must not appear too easy to get on Welfare.

"Now, Mr. G—," I went on, "what were you doing between March and June of 1963?"

Mr. G—, according to my records, was a diabetic and an alcoholic. He had a history of mental illness. Mrs. G— had "hypertension," "female troubles," and a history of mental illness. Their 18-year-old son was mentally retarded, suffered from a rheumatic heart, and had a Juvenile Court record. Their 16-year-old daughter was "emotionally disturbed," had a record of "promiscuity," and also had a Juvenile Court record. Four other children were in school, and all had records of high absenteeism. There were three preschool children, one of them mentally retarded.

The G— family had had no money coming in since Mr. G— had been fired from his job as a messenger. He had passed out on the street. His boss said he was drunk. Mr. G— said it was diabetes. Whatever the cause, the result was that the G— family, right now, had no money, no lights, no food. And their landlord was threatening them with eviction.

I didn't exactly fall in love with the G— family, but I knew that they needed money. Yes, they were unco-operative, yes, they needed rehabilitation and treatment. But most of all they needed *money*.

I wrote into my case record a strong recommendation that the G— family get emergency assistance. I went over to talk to my supervisor. "Why aren't the oldest children working?" she asked. "Why isn't Mr. G— looking for work?"

Why isn't Mrs. G— looking for work? I think *somebody* in the family is working. They've been managing *up* to now." I argued with her, but authority triumphed. No money for the G— family until an investigator had visited them.

So I went back to confront Mrs. G—.

"We need money," she snapped. "We haven't eaten since yesterday."

"I'll do the best I can for you."

"Just get us some money. That's the best you can do."

"Mrs. G—, I'll send an investigator to your place—on an *urgent* basis. He'll be there within—"

"What about *today*?"

"... er, and I've been instructed to tell you that either you or your husband will have to look for work, or—"

"Work? I'm sick and I have sick children! My husband's sick! We're gonna get evicted. We don't have lights. We don't have *food*. You're telling me—"

"Now, Mrs. G—," I interrupted, "you won't get anywhere by screaming."

My desk was the center of attention.

"*Like hell I won't!*" she bellowed. "I won't get nowhere by being *nice*! I'm gonna start a riot! If I don't get money right now, Goddamit, I'm gonna start a *riot*!"

My supervisor called me over. She had decided the G— family should be given emergency cash for food. And she specifically told me to tell them we were *not* giving them the money because Mrs. G— had made a scene.

* * *

I do not mean to imply that all of us Welfare employees were heartless and incompetent, or even that we didn't have our own troubles. We had it rough, too.

For one thing, everybody hated us. Not long ago, I overheard two teen-agers walking down my street singing, to the tune of *America*, "Go home relief, go home relief. . . ." In a popularity contest among New York's poor, the Welfare Department would rank even below the Police Department.

As much as anybody, we employees ourselves hated the Welfare Department. We were unappreciated and overworked. Two hours after

arriving on the job in May, 1960, I found myself responsible for 60 families—a relatively light caseload. A fellow trainee got 90 and quit the following week.

On my first day, I sat at my desk and spoke to a harassed-looking fellow on my left. “Been here long?” I asked.

“Nine years,” he answered, apparently glad to be taken away from his work.

“Making a career of it, huh?”

“Naw—just marking time.”

When I resigned, he was still there—13 years and still marking time. But of every 100 trainees hired in May, 1964, over 40 had quit by May, 1965.

A job with the Welfare Department does pay \$6000 a year, and does offer security. Many people remain because they are not qualified to do anything else. A number have physical or mental problems. Many are middle-aged or older and cannot get other jobs. But for many employees the disadvantages outweigh the advantages. Many staffers, for example, take the test to become a supervisor. Some who pass it refuse the appointment. Being a supervisor is an admission that you’re making a career of it.

Even our heartlessness toward our clients was, in a way, understandable. Many of us were only a paycheck away from being a case-number ourselves. Naturally, we didn’t want to identify, or be identified, with our clients, so we continually tried to prove that they were different from us—they were lazy, or inept, or bums. *We* would never get so hard up that *we* had to go on Welfare.

The nature of the system also helps explain why Welfare employees often become their clients’ enemies. The fact is that Welfare wants fewer clients. That’s a sign that the Department is doing its job properly. Besides, if everybody who actually was eligible for Welfare applied for help, chaos would result. There are over 500,000 people on Welfare in New York City now, but there are another million, just as poor, who are not on Welfare. Many of them prefer to remain in extreme poverty rather than lose whatever little dignity they have left. There is a terrible stigma attached to “being on Welfare.” In my building, I heard a Puerto Rican teen-ager shout to a

friend, “Hey, case number. . . .” Applicants begin their pleas with, “I wouldn’t be here, but—” The Welfare Department, no doubt, finds this stigma helpful. Keeping clients away keeps taxes down, and keeping taxes down keeps the big-time politicians, who rule over the Welfare Department, happy.

* * *

There is no question but that the Department of Welfare, as a rehabilitative institution, is a failure. It dispenses funds on the basis of arbitrary decisions; it denies assistance in cases of genuine need; it has done virtually nothing to make its employees professionals. True, college degrees are required, but my degree in literature didn’t help me deal with people’s problems. What is needed are intelligent, mature people who want to help others—and to hell with the college degree. Let the frustrated actors and the moonlighting housewives mark time elsewhere. Welfare is a full-time job and demands knowledge and dedication.

The Welfare Department does not do its job in referring clients with mental, legal, or marital problems to other agencies. A majority, I would say, of the people on Welfare have problems other than financial ones. Yet Welfare workers are not even trained to recognize these problems. A man quits his job and can’t get another. He comes to Welfare. He has a long history of quitting jobs, always because of “personal conflicts” with his employers or fellow employees. Instead of realizing that this man needs psychiatric help, Welfare punishes him (and his wife and children) for having left his last job by not giving him any money.

Worst of all, the Welfare Department has little compassion. Its prevailing attitudes are arrogance, contempt, and suspicion. It pays no attention to the privacy of the poor, to their self-respect, to their elementary human desires. Recently the Citizens Committee for Children of New York condemned the whole Welfare system as “a monster bureaucracy that dehumanizes its clients.”

Some rules that Welfare has laid down include: employed men on relief should use only 90 razor blades a year; unemployed men, 50. A

12-year-old should get 20¢ a month for school expenses. A woman should use no more than 48 bobby pins a year. A woman, employed, should buy two lipsticks a year; a woman who is unemployed, one.

Most clients are heavily in debt, but the Department pays no debts other than rent and utilities. It forbids clients to pay other debts out of their Welfare money, even if their furniture is being repossessed. Of course, the Department wouldn't dream of letting a client buy a TV set. Once, at Christmastime, I was interviewing a family of five in their apartment. The mother followed me outside the door and asked half-heartedly, "Uh, Mr. Youree, do you think you could get us a little something extra for toys for the children?" My answer was no: No provision is made in the Welfare budget for luxuries like that.

Yes, the Welfare Department abuses the poor, and so do the government agencies that control the purse-strings. But while I'm on the subject of who's to blame, let me mention

Employers. Many of them pay only the minimum legal wage to their help, counting on Welfare to provide whatever else a destitute family needs. Also, knowing that an employee on Welfare can't quit or he will lose his stipend, employers treat such employees like dirt. The employee becomes a virtual slave. Other employers habitually fire a new man before he becomes eligible to join a union and get a mandatory salary raise—then hire other employees, fire them, and so on.

Landlords. Knowing that the poor are ignorant of the law, and afraid of lawyers and courts, many landlords will neglect making necessary repairs—and evict their tenants whenever they feel like it. Some deliberately jack up the rent for Welfare tenants, hoping that Welfare will cover the increase. If Welfare doesn't, out the family goes.

Employment agencies. Some sell jobs to needy people, then kick back part of the money to the employer—so he'll lay them off in a few weeks. Thus the employment agency will have a new job to fill and a new fee to collect.

Retailers. When it comes to finances, the poor are babes in the woods. A widow I had as a

client bought an electric iron from a door-to-door salesman representing a large appliance house. She gave him \$5 down and a dollar every week for 26 weeks—for an iron she could have bought for \$10. Another client, against Welfare rules, bought a portable TV set for \$10 down and \$5 from each of 53 subsequent Welfare checks. For a \$95 TV, all in all she paid \$275. (Welfare clients are not permitted to buy on credit either, but many do rather than ask—or wait—for a special grant.)

Many grocers pad the bills of people on Welfare. A grocer may keep his bills on pieces of wrapping paper. Later, he adds a new figure to the column, or changes a 3 to an 8. A number of my clients complained to me about this, and I told them to keep their own bills. One lady did. It came to \$26. Her grocer's bill came to over \$36.

Usually I told my clients to shop at supermarkets, where prices are usually lower and no credit is extended. But even supermarkets in poor areas sometimes charge higher prices for the poor, knowing that the poor don't know better, or don't have the time to shop around. A recent study done by the Citizens Committee for Metropolitan Affairs found that drug stores in poor neighborhoods charge 6% more than drug stores in wealthy neighborhoods. It's damned expensive to be poor.

In short, virtually everyone takes advantage of people in poverty. The poor don't want trouble, they are ignorant of the law, afraid of lawyers and courts, harassed on all sides, and without powerful friends or influence.

* * *

If I were to single out one force that is responsible for stigmatizing the poor, it is our American press, our magazines and newspapers. When a newspaper wants to "crusade," the editor knows he can get into trouble. Sure, the Mayor may summon a patrol car to taxi his daughter to school, the board of education may charge all bidders on school construction a kickback fee, zoning-board members may grant variances in return for certain favors, the planning board may amend its code to accommodate a spendthrift builder, a judge may hold a private hearing for

an illustrious citizen, and the police may hush up the fact that a politician in a nearby town was arrested for drunken-driving. But these people, a newspaper editor knows, have money and influence. With the poor, you don't have to worry.

And so a favorite ploy of newspapers is to write about "Welfare chiselers." Time and again the *New York Daily News* fearlessly exposes these dreadful people.

Yes, there are Welfare chiselers. Some people on Welfare should be working, or are working on the sly, or have money hidden away, or have concealed sources of income. During 1964, the New York Bureau of Resources obtained 113 convictions in fraud cases involving Welfare. Out of 500,000 cases, 113.

Besides, many times I had to sympathize with Welfare clients who cheated. Try to support your wife and three children on \$213.45 a month, and you'd probably cheat a little yourself. Or apply for Welfare, endure repeated investigations, and see if you don't feel like chiseling to "get even."

I had several clients who did odd jobs occasionally and didn't report it. If the amount was small or the income irregular, I chose to ignore it. What man is going to clean out a cellar or unload a truck, then march down to the Welfare center and turn over the few dollars he's made? Let him use it to pay off a debt, take his kids to a movie, or anesthetize himself with whiskey for a few hours.

Some of my clients had teen-aged children who worked after school, but didn't report it. So let the boy dress up and take his girl out. Why should *he* be penalized because his father isn't a banker? Other Welfare Departments across the country recognize the value of incentive, and let their clients keep whatever extra money they've earned.

As for the myth that most people on Welfare don't *want* to work, the fact is that 85% of the adults on relief are elderly, disabled, or mothers of small children. Only 3.6% are theoretically employable. And, according to the Welfare Department itself, many of these cannot get or hold jobs because of "automation, lack of skills, or discrimination."

Not only do newspapers and magazines love exposing "Welfare chiselers." They also loathe writing about the real problems of the poor. It's depressing reading. It annoys advertisers, who don't like their beautiful, four-color ads facing a photograph of a slum. Besides, magazines want to convince advertisers that their readers are rich enough to buy Bolex cameras and Brooks Brothers suits. And to attract rich readers, you print articles about vacations in Asia and the latest developments in stereo sets—not about the problems of the poor.

Among magazines one exception is *Public Welfare*, published by the American Public Welfare Association. This magazine, in October, 1965, ran some actual case histories of poor people. And if you want to know how the poor really live, here are some of the interviews:

An 8-year-old boy, asked whether he saves any money, answers: "Maybe one of these days I'll be able to save. But if I had money, I would first buy two knives, two guns, and a holster, and then I'd kill the people who robbed my apartment. And then I'd buy a hat and new pants for my father so he could look for a job. And then I'd buy cake, cookies, candy, toys, and furniture so we'd have something to sit on in the living room."

A young mother was pregnant, but didn't want the unemployment office to know—a pregnant woman can't work and will not receive unemployment compensation. She says: "I'd wear a girdle to the unemployment office and as soon as I'd sign the check, I'd run to the ladies' room and take it off and thank God I had another check stacked away. What did I lie for? I'll tell you—to be able to buy my child's crib."

Mr. and Mrs. F— are explaining some of their dilemmas. Should they complain to the landlord about poor service and risk being evicted—or put up with faulty plumbing and falling plaster? Should they leave the lights burning all night to keep away rats—or keep the lights off to keep the utility bill low, and take a chance with the rats? A child of theirs is sick, but doesn't have adequate clothing. Do they dare take him outside to a clinic? Should the father go to a clinic himself and lose a half-day's pay, or not go at all?

Should they send the children to school with shoddy clothing, or keep them home and answer notes from truant officers?

An elderly man is being interviewed: "What can you do if you're not lucky enough in the richest city in the world? We've got to go on Welfare and have the Welfare worker come up and see us and tell us how to live, and then she looks into the icebox at what we have. They want to know what kind of clothes you have, and when they see a telephone they want to know who is paying for it and why the money isn't being used for food. They try every way to get you. They make it hard for you and they don't want to know from nothing. But *they* get a big salary every week.

"But you've got to make the best of it.

"One of these days I'll go to the top of the Brooklyn Bridge, yell 'Here I go,' and then jump off. And you know what? Nobody will know! Nobody will care! Nobody will miss me. Maybe the Welfare will be happy because they wouldn't have to give me money any more.

"Who are you going to fight? City Hall? You've got to have pull, and if you don't have it, it's no good."

Mrs. C— has three children. When it comes to economizing, she's very clever. Someone gave her family a used TV set, so she decided not to buy a clock—to learn the time, she turns on the TV. Her oldest boy recently was making his first communion. The Welfare Department refused to give her money to buy him a communion suit. So she asked friends for loans of 10¢ and 25¢, and raised \$7 for the suit. To quote from the report:

"Being without proper clothes herself, she did not attend the communion. When her son returned home, he was proud of how he looked, and asked permission to visit old friends in the neighborhood. She understood and agreed.

"Many hours later he came back—with over \$1 in change. When she pressed him for an explanation, he volunteered that when he arrived at his old haunts, he met the grocery man, who offered him a commission for selling frozen-fruit pies. Of course he agreed.

"And Mrs. C—'s last words for that interview were: 'And can you imagine my little sweet Alex, standing there in his communion suit, selling ices to make some money? What a picture!' She began to laugh. And she laughed and laughed and laughed, and as she looked at me, her cheek bones twitched, her lips trembled, and her

tears of laughter dissolved into tears of weeping."

Perhaps if general magazines and newspapers printed interviews like this, the poor might not have to bear, in addition to all their other burdens, the stigma of being on Welfare.

It all boils down to something very simple: the poor need more money. The Welfare Department's own house organ, *The Welfarer*, stated in 1964: "The Welfare budget [set for those on relief] is 25% below the poverty line. . . . The time has come to recognize the inadequate welfare grant as deplorable and in contradiction with the objective of the war on poverty." And until more money is available, the G—s, the H—s, and the S—s, all basically honest people, will beg for money for winter coats and shoes and beds and kitchen chairs, and will continue to "chisel" to buy a TV set or take a trip to the country.

But the poor need something besides money. They need guidance in consumer practices, they need legal help, they need someone to watch over their interests (like an "ombudsman"—a public officer charged with rectifying injustice), and they need—second only to money—self-respect. Most of the men and women I met had plenty of self-contempt: They didn't need outside condemnation.

* * *

This last point was ingrained in my mind in 1965, just before I left the Welfare Department and took a less-depressing, less-frustrating job with a publishing company.

I had stopped off in a bar on my way home from work. It had been an unusually "normal" day and I needed a drink. The bar was nearly empty, and rather bleak, so I finished my drink quickly and started to leave. Just then a well-dressed young man entered. He recognized me.

"Mr. Youree!"

It took only a second for me to recognize him: It was Mr. H—, the man who had been getting \$16 a month because of a bureaucratic mix-up. We shook hands and he offered to buy me a drink. "Never mind that 'Mister,'" he said. "Call me John. What's your first name, anyway?"

Investigators do not encourage clients to call them by their first names. They certainly don't accept drinks from them. Clients aren't

even *supposed* to drink. But what the hell? We were two men sitting in a bar.

John paid for our drinks with a \$20 bill (approximately one-third of his semimonthly grant). When he put the change in his wallet, I noticed enough additional twenties to cover his family's basic needs for at least 3 months. The suit he was wearing probably cost another five twenties. What was this guy trying to pull?

"Thanks, John," I said, raising my glass. We drank to each other's health.

He smiled. "Thank *you*, Gary."

We smalltalked through the drinks while I tried to figure out whether he was testing me. Some clients, when they discover you'll swing along with some minor illegalities, try to see just how much of a swinger you are.

"Have another drink," John said amiably, giving me a friendly slap on the arm.

I told him I had to go home. He smiled. "Well, have one more—I'll drive you home. I bought a car last week." He waited a moment, then grinned. "Don't worry—I'm off Welfare and back in business again. Doing well too!" He rapped the bar sharply and laughed. The bartender refilled our glasses.

As he drove me home, he told me how happy he and his family were since he had gone back to work. And as we neared my neighborhood, he spoke of what a hell of a bad time they had had on Welfare. The first investigator had pulled open bureau drawers, opened closets, boxes, and even looked under the beds. "What was that idiot looking for?"

The second investigator visited him only once, staying about 5 minutes. He had promised everything and delivered nothing.

"I don't know how many times I called him," John said. "He was always 'working on it.' The last time I called, the bastard had resigned."

And I was his next investigator—for 2 months. Then came a reassignment and he had a fourth investigator. Maybe more—he didn't say.

We were turning off the East River Drive. "At least you treated us like other human beings," he said. "And you *did* get the budget straightened out and send us a check for some clothing."

He pulled to a stop in front of my building, shut off the motor, and offered me a cigarette and lit it. "You know, Gary, I realize you people have a tough job—but I wonder how many of you realize how it feels to have somebody come in your home when you're desperate, and treat you like a piece of shit? It's not just the questions you ask—I realize they're necessary. It's the *way* some of you ask them. It's the whole general attitude...." He went on, telling me how his wife used to cry after an investigator had been there, and how so many times his only consolation was a promise he made to himself that he would break open the first investigator's head he saw after he was off Welfare. He hastily assured me that he no longer felt that way. I informed him that I was glad to hear it. We shook hands again and he drove away—reminding me again that his name was John.

* * *

John called me at work the next day.

"I was thinking last night about what I told you, Gary—when I said that at least you treated us like human beings. We were in bad shape when you saw us, worse than anybody will ever know. I take back that 'at least.' If there was anything we needed more than money, it was to be treated with dignity and respect—like human beings."

Editor:

Francesca Milano's criticism of laws and legislators (May-June, 1966) who do nothing to ameliorate the abortion problem is typical of certain women who are apathetic about and uninterested in abortion—except when they find themselves with an unwanted pregnancy. Then they are quick to deplore the fear, whispering, subterfuge, high costs, and frustrating run-around that attend the abortion racket.

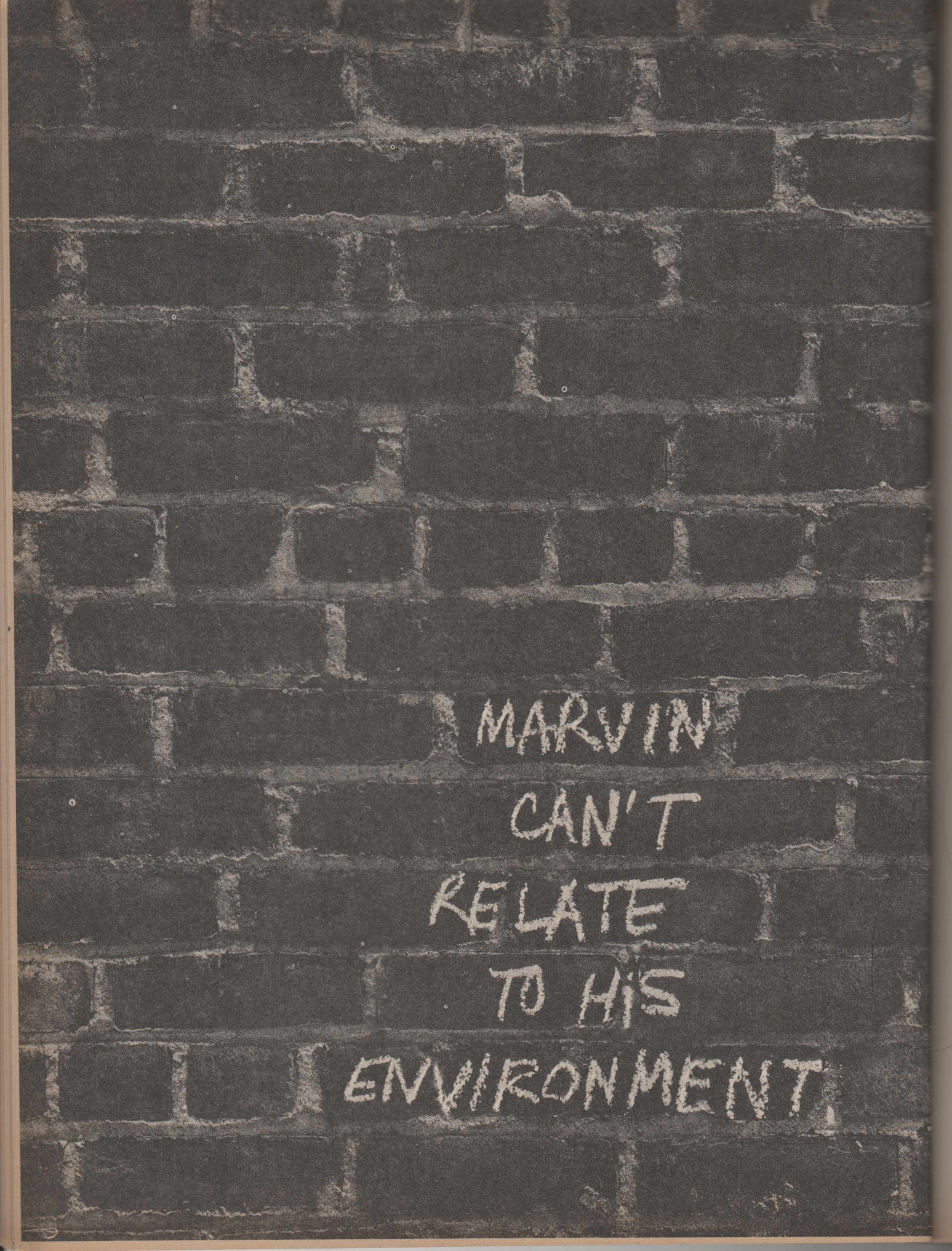
When women stand up and howl for decent abortion care, then and only then will abortion statutes be removed from the criminal code, and this simple, surgical procedure (safer than childbirth when performed under proper conditions) be available to all women.

Rowena Gurner, Executive Secretary
Society for Humane Abortion
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Editor:

Fred Cook's article on Jesus de Galindez (March-April, 1966) is not complete—but only because I am afraid the entire story may never be known in our lifetime. But it is the first article which reviews the case fairly, with as much information as has been made available. As such, it is an invaluable contribution to contemporary political history.

Stanley Ross, Editor
El Tiempo
New York, New York

A dark, textured brick wall with white graffiti. The bricks are dark and weathered, with light-colored mortar. The graffiti is written in a bold, blocky, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in five lines, centered horizontally. The first line is 'MARVIN', the second is 'CAN'T', the third is 'RELATE', the fourth is 'TO HIS', and the fifth is 'ENVIRONMENT.'.

MARVIN
CAN'T
RELATE
TO HIS
ENVIRONMENT.

The Golden Age of Graffiti

By Warren Boroson

An amateur graffitologist explains why so much of today's most significant and wittiest writing can be found scrawled on walls

Graffiti—scrawls on walls, sidewalks, books, etc., from the Italian word for “scratching”—have suddenly begun undergoing a glorious rebirth. Once despised and sneered at by all save students of psychopathology, today graffiti are being searched out and scrutinized by journalists, politicians, sociologists, and even by ordinary men and women who happen to appreciate wit and whimsy.

Irrefutable evidence of this new fascination with graffiti is the way newspapers and magazines have been quoting them as expressions of popular opinion. To illustrate anti-American sentiment in Santo Domingo, for example, *Life* ran a photo of a wall bearing the graffito **Fuera Yanks de Vietnam**. When Israel got its first West German ambassador, *Newsweek* reported: “...walls all over Israel blossomed out with a crudely lettered slogan: ‘Zkor, zkor’ (‘Remember, remember’).” After Algeria’s Ben Bella was imprisoned, UPI sent its clients a wirephoto of a wall with this graffito: **Libérer Ben Bella**. Reporting from Indonesia, the *New York Times* notes: “‘Hang the Ministers,’ says one slogan, painted in bold letters on a fence. . . . ‘Remember the people’s sufferings,’ says another sign. . . .” The left-wing *Minority of One* has published a letter from a Frenchman who saw, in Paris, graffiti like **U.S.=S.S.** and **Americans=Assassins**. The right-wing *America* has reported that when Warsaw was plastered with posters announcing Polish-

Soviet Friendship Week, someone scribbled beneath one of them, “Okay—but not one second longer.”

This rebirth of the political graffito has a number of possible parents. In poverty-stricken areas, the man lying in the street has few literary outlets for his hotblooded polemics, and hence uses chalk and the nearest wall to express his discontent. Graffiti of this type include **Yanqui Go Home** (in South America, *passim*) and **I Hate Mr. Skins** (in Watts, discovered by Mr. Joseph Alsop on the back of a bench after the first riot).

In totalitarian countries, the graffito is the last, all-but-ineradicable medium of free speech. For even if 1984 does come to pass, in the dead of night a malcontent can always slip out and scrawl on a sidewalk, **Down With Big Brother**. No wonder dictators seem to have an irrational aversion to graffiti. At the Potsdam Conference after World War II, someone scribbled the sassy graffito **Kilroy Was Here** in one of the guarded toilets assigned to the Big Four. As psychiatrist Martin Grotjahn writes in *Beyond Laughter*,

The story has it that Stalin was quite upset and the meeting came to a temporary standstill when he found that Kilroy had been in the dictator’s bathroom and had left his signature there. The search for Kilroy was called off after complicated translation, interpretation, and explanation. Stalin either misunderstood the joke of Kilroy or, in a deeper analytic sense, he understood the spirit of rebellion all too well and disapproved of it.

As for nontotalitarian but overdeveloped countries like America, the trouble is that our newspapers and magazines have little available space after all the ads have been shoveled in; most of the contents are staff-written anyway; and even the letters-to-the-editor columns are finely screened. On the other hand, it's no problem at all for someone to visit the nearest subway station and scrawl **Get Out of Vietnam** or **If You Liked Hitler, You'll Love Buckley**, sans censors and sans editors.

* * *

Not all modern graffiti are political, though. Many are genuinely funny. Evidence comes, once again, from our magazines and newspapers. For a number of years now, the upper-class *New Yorker* has been amused by what it considers lower-class whimsy, and has regularly published graffiti like **Mrs. Moynihan Eats Watercress**. *Esquire* recently recorded this incident: A man and his wife, leaving a theater where they had seen and suffered through *The Loved One*, paused to read the notices: "'... a daring comedy'—Cue; 'Ferocious fun'—Telegram." Unable to restrain himself, the man walked over to a marble column and scribbled, "'... a real bomb, believe me'—Jacob Miller." A graffito has even been chosen the *New York Times's* Quotation of the Day. After Yale University produced the Vinland Map, which suggested that Columbus had not really discovered America, a *Times* reporter found the following scrawled on a wall in the Italian section of Boston: **Leif Ericson Is a Fink**.

Most likely, it is the Sexual Revolution that is responsible for the resurgence of witty graffiti. Now that four-letter words are losing their shock value, and homosexuals can make assignations through night clubs, and movies and magazines have enlightened many people about the finer details of human anatomy, the deviates have largely ceased writing obscenities on subway walls and have gone on to expressing sentiments like **Bomb Hanoi** and **Be a Man, Join the Klan**. This, by Gresham's Law, has left the field open to the wits, and the result is that some of the cleverest writing in America today can be found scrawled on walls. (The selection of graffiti that follows this article should prove this beyond

cavil.) Not since the days of ancient Pompeii (see *The Common People of Pompeii, A Study of Graffiti* by Helen H. Tanzer) have the graffiti-writers enjoyed such a Golden Age. Comic Jackie Vernon boasts that he used to write Rx on Christian Science Reading Room windows, and draw Stars of David on Volkswagens. Poet Allen Ginsberg was temporarily expelled from Columbia for one of his earlier graffito-writings. Playwright Edward Albee got the title for a play from a graffito he once saw: **Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?**

It remains to be said that the future promises much more of the same. As totalitarianism increases, we can expect to see ever more political graffiti. And as the Sexual Revolution inches ahead, we can look forward to a profusion of witty graffiti. Clearly, the handwriting is on the wall.

Reported by *Drum Magazine*, seen on a subway poster:

My Mother Made Me a Homosexual
(below)

Great! Would she make one for me?

Al Dort, West Side IND Station:

Jesus Saves!

Moses Invests!

David Forsberg, San Francisco's North Beach:

Alice B. Toklas Loves Gertrude Stein

Release Oscar Wilde

Herb Caen, on a wall:

Support Mental Health like Crazy!

Boroson, on 86th St. Lexington Avenue subway station:



Brotherhood

Frank Farrell, Greenwich Village pavement:

Marvin Can't Relate to His Environment

Joan Mathews, Canal St. subway:

Atomic War Now

Jeffrey Page, Greenwich Village subway:

DeSapio Lives!

Support Mental Health or I'll Kill You

Mary Poppins Is a Junkie

Hugh Hefner Is a Virgin

Jonathan Routh, men's room in London:

Minnie Mouse Is a Jew

John Wilcock, on a subway poster saying "Did You Make New York Dirty Today?":

New York Makes ME Dirty Every Day

John Scanlon, men's room, Greenwich Village:

Judge Crater, Call Your Office ImmediatelyWilcock, *Métro* in Paris:**God Is Retrogressive and Hostile***New Yorker*, Flushing subway:**Peace Is a Cool Scene**

M.S. Stoddart, Washington Heights station:

New York Is a Summer Vegetable

Ron Nordell, on Harvard Square wall:

Hugh Is a Dirty Neoclassicist

Anonymous, men's room in Hollywood:

I'm 10½ Inches Long and 3 Inches Wide*(below)***How Intriguing! And How Big Is Your Penis?***New Yorker*, on a fence along with graffiti like "Joe loves Betty":**Sue Wilson and Nobody As Yet***New Yorker*, IRT subway station:**Chicken Little Was Right**

Robert Thomsen, Chinatown (the Chinese are taught to always be respectful):

Wong Is a Very Naughty BoyBoroson, on subway poster stating, "I got my job through the *New York Times*":**So Did Castro**

Mrs. Nat Norflett, Buenos Aires:

Yankee Go Home*(below)***By Pan-American**

Robert Sylvester, Greenwich Village sidewalk:

John Feels Insecure About Mary

George Monteiro, grammar-school book:

The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away;**Indian-Giver Be the Name of the Lord.**

Thomsen, in Greenwich Village at Christmas

time, on a men's room wall:

**A Merry Christmas
to All Our Readers**

Seymour Goldstaub, at Columbia University, near the artiest art-movie in America:

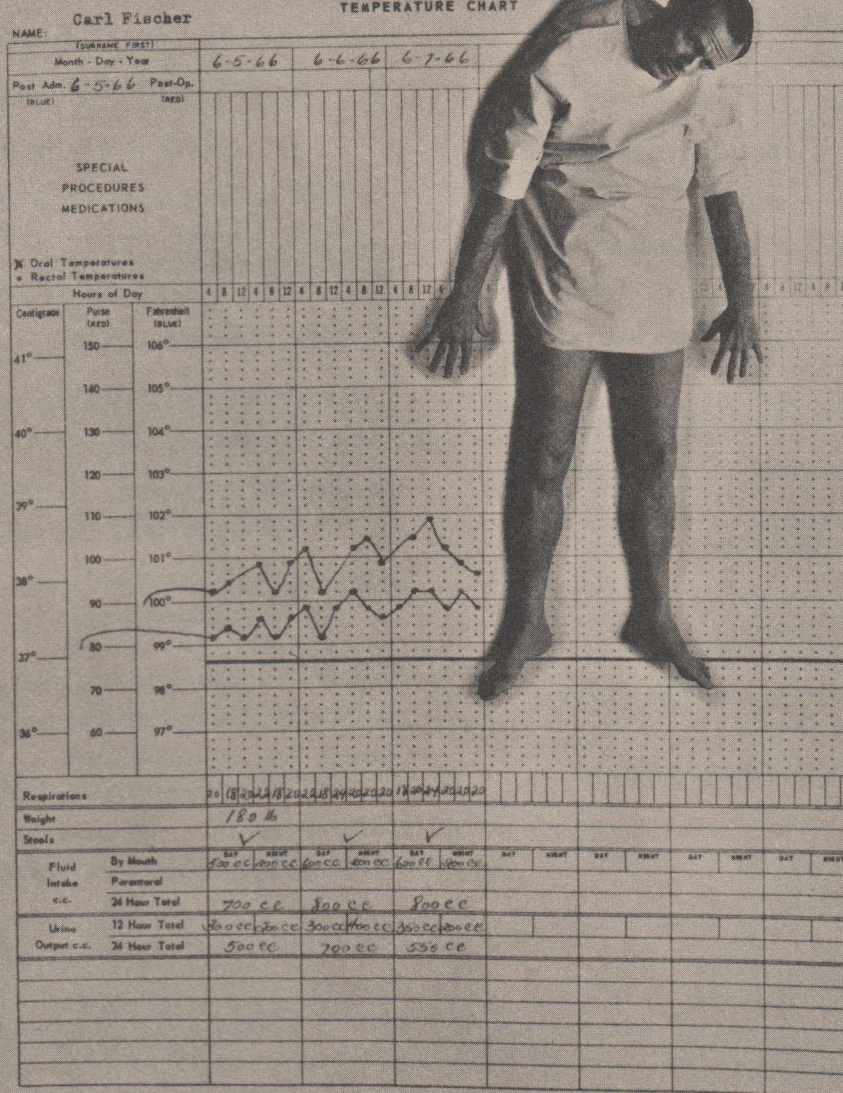
The Thalia Is a Tourist Trap

Robert Reisner, from a forthcoming book of graffiti found in men's rooms:

I've Got What Every Woman Wants*(below)***You Must Be in the Fur Coat Business****Take a Viet Cong to Lunch This Week****James Baldwin Eats Watermelon****Leda Loves Swans****God Is Alive and Living in Argentina***(after a string of obscenities)***This Is Why We May Be Second to the Moon****Merry Syphilis and a Happy Gonorrhea****Occupancy By More Than 401 Persons is
Dangerous, Unlawful, and Somewhat Unsanitary****Now Being Organized: The Greenwich
Village Heterosexual Club***(at the posh Four Seasons restaurant)***Screw Home Cooking****Millard Fillmore Was the First President Born
in the 19th Century***(below)***Who Was Millard Fillmore?***(below)***Millard Fillmore Was a Dirty Commie Rat***New York Times*, at Columbia University:**God Is Dead: Nietzsche***(below)***Nietzsche Is Dead: God**

Mike Nichols, on wall of a building:

I Love Grils*(Next day, this was crossed out and in its place was written:)***I Love Girls***(Third day, new handwriting:)***What About Us Grils?**



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America's Hospitals: Undercure in an Age of Overkill

By Sloan Wilson

According to the author, nurses *don't* have to be surly, hospitals *don't* have to be depressing, and patients *don't* have to be treated like convicts. But to make hospitals fit places for human beings, a bold, radical step is needed...

Lately I have been reading a good deal about the crisis of American hospitals. With Medicare coming, a lot of people are going to be able to afford hospital care who in the good old days died quietly and inexpensively at home. With the cost of living going up, nurses and other hospital employees are getting restless and are joining unions, which proclaim the odd idea that people whose profession is healing should also be allowed to eat well. And patients who find beds crowded in wards and corridors supervised by gruff, overworked people are voicing astonishment that they have not stumbled into some medical utopia of the kind they see constantly depicted on TV. When charged up to \$70 a day for medical care that even a layman can tell is lacking, many a middle-class person wonders, What's going on around here?

Well, what is?

One thing not many people realize is going on: Hospitals are much more important to all of us nowadays than they were even 10 or 20 years ago. In the old days most people were, of course, born at home and they died there. Today, not only do most of us begin and end our lives in hospitals, but we go there for diseases that formerly were treated in the local doctor's office or in our own bedrooms. As medical technology becomes more and more complicated, the importance of the hospital keeps increasing. It's a rare

person nowadays who doesn't visit a hospital a dozen times during the last third of his life. Hospitals are the settings for our greatest personal tragedies.

Despite the fact that virtually all of us have a hospital in our future, whether we like to think about it or not, hospitals are not a subject that arouses the sustained indignation of most Americans. People tend to be grateful to a hospital if they escape from it alive. If they see conditions that are not right there, they feel embarrassed to comment, because the whole place is under the supervision of physicians, and how can a layman argue with a doctor about how to cure people? As soon as most of us are well, we like to forget hospitals. The very smell of them is enough to bring on the horrors.

Yet sustained public indignation is what is needed if the money and determination to maintain good or even adequate hospitals is to be found.

Now, a good many people tell me I shouldn't write about hospitals because I'm not an expert. I dispute this.

Of course, I'm not a physician, and I'm not a psychiatrist, and I'm not a hospital administrator. I am not, thank God, a nurse, nor have I ever been a nurse's aid, an orderly, or even a volunteer worker in a hospital. In fact, what I've done all of my life is to keep away from hospitals

as much as possible.

Unfortunately, almost no one can have a perfect record in this matter. Several times I have been a patient, although by the grace of God, not recently. My four children were all born in hospitals. I have been a visitor in hospitals many times when friends and relatives were being repaired. Two of the people I have loved best in my lifetime learned about their last illnesses in hospitals.

I don't claim this makes me more expert than most people about hospitals, but it does mean that I'm not ignorant. The mechanics of hospital administration may be beyond me, but I know enough to ask six important questions.

* * *

1. Why do hospitals treat their nurses and other employees so badly?

If these people are discontent and harried, the patient cannot hope for much. As things now stand, a lot of the kindness that hospitals are supposed to show patients must, in effect, come out of the hides of the nurses and nurses' aids, who are asked to take care of more patients than any human being can be expected to clean up after, never mind treat according to any prescribed course of medicine. The young women who go into nursing generally have high ideals and a deep fund of human kindness, I believe, but after having been made to run their legs off for a few years, they can hardly help becoming hardened. Dehumanized nurses have a dehumanizing effect upon the patients, who in their hours of pain often need kindness and sympathy more than anything else. Nowadays it is generally easier to find an understanding listener during the rush hour at Grand Central Station than in the ward of a city hospital.

All my life I have heard and read about beautiful, sympathetic nurses. I have even known a few socially, but the nurses I meet on duty in hospitals invariably seem to be trying to act out the stereotyped part of somebody's mother-in-law on the rampage.

"Please be quiet!" they shout at the top of their voices. "Visitors are not allowed now! I'm sorry, but you can't smoke here! Now you listen here, absolutely no drinking is allowed in this

hospital! No, the book cart isn't available!"

When they are not talking in these dulcet tones, they sugar their voices with a sickening kind of baby talk that I used to hate when I was 3 years old.

"It's time for our breakfast now!" one nurse said to me every morning for a week.

In a fury I finally asked, "Are you going to climb in bed with me and share the tray?"

"Oh, aren't we funny this morning! I guess we are getting better, aren't we?"

If one stays in a hospital long enough, one may even come to like this sort of talk, compared with the usual lack of any response from the nurses. I have often wondered why they put push-buttons by hospital beds if nobody ever pays any attention to the bells when they ring. Even when one has private nurses around the clock, it is often impossible to get a nurse until one's thumb turns blue from the pressure.

I don't blame nurses for being cranky, I blame this horrible system of treating the sick that dehumanizes everybody, both patients and nurses. Faced with the conditions most nurses have to live with year after year, I couldn't keep my sanity for more than a month. When faced with too much suffering and too much work, any human being has to grow somewhat apathetic in order to survive. I feel sure that if most of the nurses who charge around hospital corridors with hard faces and strident voices were given a reasonable number of patients to care for, and enough pay to make their own lives tolerable, they might grow to be something like those Angels of Mercy I keep reading about.

Hospital administrators are always groaning about the shortage of nurses, but to my mind the real wonder is that they can get anyone at all to put on that white dress. Lucky to get \$5000 or \$6000 a year, expected to work all hours around the clock, and required to involve themselves in the most torturous details of life and death, the nurses have to be either starving people who can get hardly any other kind of work, or saints.

The dilemma of the nurses is all the more pitiable because the many saints among them are not given the opportunity to be saintly. The

overworked nurse has added to all her other burdens the knowledge that she is doing her job badly. Convinced that patients under her care may die from lack of attention, the nurse often blames not only the system, but herself. Exhausted, guilty, impoverished, our nurses and their even more pathetically underpaid aids are a strange comment on our Great Society.

* * *

2. Why do our hospitals treat the matter of birth so badly?

A lot of people are surprised to find that the United States does not have as good a record in infant mortality as do many other nations. Fourteen other nations have fewer deaths per thousand births than the United States has. Sweden's infant-mortality rate is 12.4 per 1000 births. The State of Washington's rate is 35.2, and New York's is 38.1. One reason is that our prenatal clinics are so crowded, inaccessible, and downright callous in their treatment of people that countless mothers refuse to go to them. An expectant mother who already has one or more children to care for often cannot waste hours standing in line, or reading magazines in a waiting room. Thousands of them just wait at home until the baby starts to come, at which point someone actually has to do something to help.

In my opinion, even those women who can afford the best hospital care get pretty poor treatment when they have babies unless they are both knowledgeable and aggressive.

Most hospitals are hostile to parents who want natural childbirth, and a husband has to fight all kinds of regulations if he wants to stay with his wife through labor. Unless the couple put up a fight, the mother will be heavily drugged almost automatically.

Not all hospitals offer the facilities for keeping an infant next to the mother's bed. Unless a big point is made of the desirability of keeping infant and mother together, the infant is automatically put in a baby ward, where he may or may not receive even basic physical care.

One thing the infant is sure to get, however, is a bottle before he sees his mother. One result is that many an infant declines to nurse vigorously. The whole hospital routine is geared for

mothers who expect to put their infants on bottles immediately or after a very brief period. The mother who wants to breast-feed is often regarded as something of an eccentric, and if she doesn't have a great deal of self-confidence, she soon gives up. And when the baby grows into a man he goes around leering mournfully at women with enormous bosoms. It is difficult to understand why our whole medical system, in infant care, seems to be geared to subverting nature.

* * *

3. Why do our hospitals treat children so badly?

Sick children do not like to be abandoned by their parents—one does not have to have a degree in psychology to realize that. A 3-year-old with a broken leg may find the process of being left by his mother in a strange, terrifying building more painful than the aching flesh, and the emotional scar in the long run may be more damaging. Ideally, hospitals should offer rooms for the mothers of sick children. Lacking the physical facilities for that, everything possible should be done to make it practical for parents to visit as often as possible and to stay as long as they can.

Few hospitals now are hospitable to the parents of children in the wards, and even when one has a child in a private room, one is rarely given a comfortable chair. Some hospitals are trying to do what they can to make visiting hours flexible, but a great many children's wards are run by harried supervisors who believe that parents just get in the way and may be harmful. Of course, there are some neurotic parents who should be kept away from sick children, but to hear hospital authorities talk, one would think the vast majority of mothers cannot be trusted with their own offspring.

One administrator told me "in strict confidence" that his hospital had to be very careful, because one family of Gypsies in New York City once tried to build a fire on the floor of a room when they were visiting their child and wanted tea. Perhaps this actually happened, but that odd story impressed me less than the fact that the administrator obviously felt those Gypsy parents were somehow typical of most of the

great unwashed public that has eternally to be watched, and distrusted.

It would take time and trouble to supervise parents intelligently, but all too few hospital authorities seem to realize that parents are what many sick children desperately need. Even hardened soldiers often cry for their mothers when they are wounded. Can't our Great Society make it possible to grant that request from a 2-year-old close to death?

* * *

4. Why do our hospitals treat dying people so badly?

According to the ethics of the medical profession, people are kept alive as long as possible, even when there is no hope of relieving their pain. If a person is dying, it is widely believed that this should be kept a secret. Perhaps many people do not want to learn they are dying, but other people do want to know, and they don't want to be subjected to the kind of false optimism and phony cheer that are dished out to the dying as a kind of standard farewell ration of our prosperity.

Just as Americans are somewhat batty on the subject of birth, it is my belief that we are very much confused about death. We assume, for one thing, that all people fear death, and want to pretend they are not dying even when their bodies are withering away in the mirror. I suppose some people find comfort in pretense, but I know that some do not. One man I knew was infuriated by the charade that doctors and nurses insisted on playing with him in his last days.

"My, you certainly are looking better today!" one nurse would say every morning, when this man was in the final stages of wasting away.

He knew she was trying to be kind, and endured her.

Dying is, of course, a highly personal act, and my point is that a crowded hospital ward is no place for it.

When a man is sick at home, his relatives can show their love by tidying up the room a little, bringing glasses of water, offering to help with the medicine. At home a sick man can find comfort in the fact that people he loves are in the next room. He does not have to confront them

steadily a few feet away for an hour at a time, or know that they have dropped out of his existence. The sounds of a normal household are comforting to a man who is dying, I have been told, and so are the familiar furnishings of his own room.

Of course, dying at home isn't much fun for anyone, either. Unless one can afford nurses around the clock, and find them, emergencies can arise that are painful for relatives. Despite this, the two people I have known well who had fatal illnesses chose to go home to die, and none of their relatives ever regretted it.

When a person is dying in a hospital, I believe he needs a little special consideration, like a private room and facilities that make it possible for his relatives to stay with him in his final hours. I believe he should be able to talk to people about his approaching end if he wishes. There are psychiatrists who know a lot about how to ease the psychic torments of dying, but their advice is rarely known or followed by harried nurses who may have a whole ward of dying people to cope with.

We give a prisoner condemned to death a talk with a chaplain and, supposedly, one last big meal on the house. A dying man or woman who has worked a lifetime for the benefit of his country and family should rate a little more. If he's going to die anyway, hospitals should be geared to give him, within reason, anything he wants in regard to privacy, food, drink, company, and psychiatric or religious counseling.

One reason, I believe, that people so often like to keep approaching death a "secret" from a patient is that then they don't have to do anything special for him. Is our country really so poor that it can't afford a farewell party tailored to the tastes of the person who is departing?

I was with a relative once in the waiting room of a hospital that looked much like a subway station at 5 P.M. A harried physician came in and said, "I am sorry to report that your father has cancer. It's all through him, and there's very little we can do."

There is no way such news can be made pleasant, but the horror of this was increased by the fact that there was no privacy, not even a place to sit down and discuss the matter without

being overheard. My relative cried in public with a great many people watching, some with casual compassion, some with complete uninterest.

Receiving news like that is a shock and, like other shocks, should be administered in carefully controlled circumstances. Why in this rich nation can't hospitals have private-consultation rooms where the relatives of the dying can be treated like the injured human beings they are?

* * *

5. Why do hospitals have to be so depressing?

Sickness and death are hardly cheerful, but they can be made even harder to bear when they take place in what looks like a morgue. If one acknowledges the fact that many of our worst emotional crises are going to take place in hospitals, why not fix them up a bit? Psychologists know that color has deep emotional effects on people. Is it necessary to have everything a ghastly white in order to have it clean? If money in this great rich nation were not always a deciding factor in hospital calculations, would it not be desirable to have hospitals that in many ways look like good hotels? Tasteful colors, rugs on the floor, paintings, a little music, nurses in attractive dresses—why are all these things so hard to imagine in a hospital?

* * *

6. Why can't hospitals treat convalescents better?

Is it really necessary to subject most convalescents to a set of petty regulations that would seem normal only to experienced convicts? "Hospital Routine" may be necessary in institutions suffering acute shortages of money and personnel, but we are never going to get better hospitals if we accept "Hospital Routine" as desirable in itself. Just because a person is sick, he doesn't necessarily have to be treated much worse than he ever has been treated while he was well. It does not say in the Bible that a sick person has to wake up at a certain time and go to bed at a certain time and have visitors at stipulated hours. No medical theory demands that sick people be served food they would spurn in their most robust days. Many people have diseases and take medicines that do not make the moderate use of alcohol harmful. Why can't they have a cocktail or a glass of wine with their meals in the hospital?

To many people that sounds fantastic, but this is only because we have settled for the stereotyped idea of a hospital that imposes puritanical regulations on everyone. Even distinguished old men are commonly treated like children, once they are made to don that humiliating, grotesque nightgown most hospitals hand to their patients. Can't the clothes designers of this age of high fashion come up with some practical hospital garment that doesn't make a person feel he is being prepared for a pauper's grave?

Why do intelligent nurses commonly talk to intelligent adults with such condescension, just because the adults are sick? There is probably no place in the world where a rich man with a record of achievement will be treated with less respect than in a hospital, where his ego probably needs more help than it ever did. And the treatment accorded the sick poor is often downright insulting.

Not long ago I visited a ward in a relatively rich hospital in New York. I saw an old man groaning while a nurse's aid was sponging his forehead.

"Aw, shut up," she said casually. "You're all right. . . ."

In a nearby ward, men and women were jammed into beds next to each other.

"We're supposed to have men's wards and women's wards," a nurse with a cheerful voice told me, "but these people are so sick they don't know what they are."

Perhaps it was true, but in a moment of consciousness I would not like to realize I had been shoved into a ward with a lot of old women because I was so sick I didn't realize what I was. And I didn't like the tone of that hard-working, cheerful nurse who seemed to believe she had just made a slightly bawdy joke.

Is it absurd to think that a person convalescing after a serious disease should be treated at least as well as when, say, he's at a summer resort? Which one of us would consider sharing a hotel room with a stranger while we're on a business trip if there were no great emergency? Yet it is considered normal to receive a "semi-private room" in a hospital, sometimes at \$50 a day, and private rooms are considered a privilege

for the self-indulgent and pampered rich. (So much are private rooms considered a luxury that their occupants are usually charged far more than cost, to make up for some of the deficits of the wards. I do not doubt that the rich should give to the poor, but I do not think that charity should be forced from them in their own time of need, and I don't think that privacy should be considered a luxury for sick people anyway.) There is, I submit, no such thing as semi-privacy, any more than there is such a thing as semi-pregnancy. Either one is private or one is not, and just because one does not wish to share a room with a coughing, snoring old stranger, one should not be subjected to a kind of luxury tax.

* * *

To sum up, I do *not* think that hospitals treat expectant mothers, infants, children, dying people, the relatives of the foregoing, and convalescents anywhere as well as might be expected in a rich nation in a time of prosperity. What, if anything, do they do well, then?

As far as I can judge, they generally provide good physical care in emergencies, which is all a lot of people expect. As medical technology advances, I have no doubt that all of us will have a better chance of surviving any disease that can be treated quickly by experts. It is when the patient is no longer considered an emergency case that he begins to suffer most. This seems a logical result of a philosophy of medicine that increasingly regards the human body as a machine devoid of emotions, no matter how much the psychiatrists learn.

In a time of emergency, a patient can receive the full blast of attention from highly trained teams of physicians armed with every conceivable kind of machine designed for the preservation of life.

But once the patient is judged no longer to be in acute physical danger, he is wheeled out into wards or rooms where nurses may at heart care a great deal about him, but where the facilities for the expression of that concern simply do not exist.

There are a few hospital people who agree with me that places for sick people do not necessarily have to be like hospitals. The Loeb Nursing

Center, which is part of the Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, is trying to treat patients like people. It keeps one nurse on duty for every two patients, and nurses are encouraged to answer the bell, even if all the sick person wants to do is talk. Nurses don't even wear uniforms at Loeb Center—they sport pretty dresses. There are almost no rules patients have to observe. If a sick person wishes to act in any way injurious to his health, the nurses and doctors warn him, but if he is in full possession of his mental faculties, they leave the decision of what to do up to him. Lydia Hall, the nurse who runs the place, says that if she had her way she would even install a small bar for the use of those patients whose sickness does not preclude alcohol.

The hospital authorities I know smile indulgently when I tell them about the Loeb Center and my ideas for making hospitals fit places for people. It's too expensive, they say. If adequate care is to be given people past the point of acute emergency, many hospital staffs would have to be doubled. If nurses were to be put into a situation where they could give the best care they know how to give, it might be necessary to employ one nurse for every two patients, and that of course would be extremely expensive. As it is, many a man has prayed to die quickly so that his widow would not be left destitute. Many a child has been robbed of a good education because the money had to be spent to cure illness in the family. If we had hospitals that treated patients like people, they would cost even more, so why talk about them?

The other reforms suggested in this article, such as more pleasant surroundings and better food, seem to harried administrators of crowded wards to be fantastic dreams. The kind of hospital I have envisioned would, I am told, cost many billions of dollars in an era when most hospitals have trouble paying their bills without making any improvements at all.

All this is no doubt true. But the gnawing question persists, How can a nation that spends so many billions of dollars on Vietnam, on reaching the moon, and on an arsenal capable of blowing up everybody in the world several times over, talk so poor when it comes to taking care of its

own infants, its own sick and dying? In an age of overkill, why so much undercure?

That is, of course, the really big question. It is easy to blame the government, but in this as in so many things, aren't our politicians shrewdly guessing the public will? A lot of people get indignant at the thought of not having enough bombers or enough rockets, but one doesn't hear a great deal of furor over hospitals that are an affront to human dignity. In some strange way the thought of bombers and rockets apparently makes people feel safe and protected, while the thought of hospitals makes them feel threatened, on the edge of death.

I do not think it would do much good to try to tell people that a civilized nation should look to its hospitals as well as to its military defense. The whole tenor of the times is against such a notion. Because of this, I have come up with a modest proposal that just conceivably might offer a ray of hope.

* * *

The way to get better hospitals in this Year of Our Lord, 1966, is to declare them part of the

Defense Program. That, I know, sounds absurd, but do you remember how much support the public schools got when people started saying we needed them to develop scientists and engineers who could compete with Russia? And our highway-building program too gets vast injections of money from the Federal Government because highways have been declared part of our system of defense.

Well, how about hospitals? My best guess is, we'll need them if war ever comes. They are much overcrowded now, and although they handle individual emergencies pretty well, how would they do in a time of real national emergency, when our cities were being bombed?

It is a chilling thought.

Write your Congressman. Tell him it is his patriotic duty to make sure we can cure as well as we can kill. He doesn't have to admit the side-benefits, for they might sound effete to a warlike people, but the happy fact is that hospitals that could cope with war at all could also offer really human conditions in time of peace.

To the Editor:

I have just finished reading Dr. Spock's views of the Cold War, and I found it the most inspiring and truthful piece of material I have ever read.

S.L. Weber
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Fact:

Wonderful issue, the one with Spock and Wilson. There's new hope for America because of men like that. Keep Wilson writing for you. He was excellent on Vietnam and Ireland!

George Kimbrough, M.D.
Louisville, Kentucky

Dear Sir:

Who the devil is this Dr. Spock? I never heard of him.

Why is it always the fish peddler who wants to be the brain surgeon?

F. Smith
York, Pa.

Gentlemen:

As I write this I am enjoying a leave of absence from one of Pennsylvania's largest state mental hospitals, where I have been a patient for approximately 1½ years. I am 17 years of age.

I am writing you in regard to the articles in your May-June issue about mental hospitals, which fortunately came into my hands after being passed around the ward. A number of the patients, knowing that I was to be sent home for 2 ecstatic weeks, suggested that I write to your magazine thanking you for publishing those articles about insane asylums.

I know the term "asylums" is considered obsolete, but we patients know them as nothing but asylums, where very little therapy is given, other than work therapy (without which the state of Pennsylvania would go broke). Travel the fields of our institution and you will view hundreds of demented men and women bent over cutting rhubarb, or husking corn, or working in the aromatic surroundings of the piggery or cow barn. And many of these "demented" men and women placed here "for protection of themselves and others" are here only because they refused to work, or threw off the chains of the disgustingly mundane middle-class existence and their relatives decided to give them a "rest."

I've been making my rounds of these places since I was 13, when I was committed to a private hospital, and truthfully I've suffered more traumatic experiences within these "protective" iron doors than I would have outside. Work--or get your medication increased. If that doesn't help, to the white table for electro-convulsive treatments, or over to the medical and surgical building for a subtle lobotomy.

Unfortunately, nobody but an attendant or patient will believe your articles, as no American wants to believe that a nation spending so much money in the Vietnam war could possibly treat its mentally-ill population so deplorably. NOBODY KNOWS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE UNTIL THEY ARE PLACED BEHIND THOSE STRONG IRON DOORS OR FEEL THE COOL TOUCH OF THE ELECTRODES AGAINST THEIR TEMPLES. Still, thank you for all the patients who read and agreed with your articles-- They Really Hit Home, Baby.

There is so much I could write, but I'm depressed by thinking of what my friends are going through back on the ward, and what I'll be doing when I return....

Michael Murphy
Elkins Park, Pa.



“The Biggest Economic Waste in Local Government Today”

By Iswar Subramanya

Most American fire departments are scandalously undermanned. Because crimes are increasing, more policemen are needed than ever. To many experts, though, the solution is simple: Just make every cop also a fireman and every fireman also a cop

In a small Ohio town not long ago, a fire broke out in the sawdust bin of a two-story woodworking factory. No one, it seemed, should have been concerned. The alarm was sounded promptly. To serve the municipality of 10,000 people, the local fire department had two pumper trucks and one aerial-ladder truck at its disposal. Besides, the fire department was *paid*—and 90% of America's fire departments depend on volunteers.

The catch was that the fire department was incredibly undermanned. Though it was only 4:45 in the afternoon when the alarm was sounded, exactly two men were on duty. At full strength, in fact, the fire department included just two men: the chief, who drove out the aerial ladder, and one rank-and-file fireman, who drove out one of the pumpers. (The second pumper was left in the fire station for a volunteer fireman to drive to the scene—if there were any volunteers around.)

Since one man is needed to man a pumper, and two other men will have their hands full handling heavy hose, the valiant chief and his subordinate could just as well have stayed in bed. No one was trapped in the blaze, thank God, but the building, valued at \$300,000, was a total loss.

That Ohio town is not unusual. An official of the National Fire Protection Association in Boston told me, “There are literally hundreds of instances where the number of trucks outnumber

the men on duty at the firehouse.” Files of the National Fire Protection Association reveal shocking instances of undermanning in fire houses around the country. The association is reluctant to identify the communities by name, because, as one official puts it, “We do not believe these places should be singled out when so many hundreds of cities are involved.” But consider a few on an anonymous basis: a town of 20,000 in New Jersey with 10 firetrucks has a full department strength of five men; another in Washington has four men for eight trucks; others in Texas, Iowa, and Illinois also have fewer men than vehicles.

And the situation is getting worse, not better. Firemen's work-weeks, for one thing, are being drastically reduced. The latest edition of the Municipal Year Book reports that, in 1963 and 1964, 260 municipalities with populations over 10,000 reduced their firemen's work-weeks. The typical fire work-week today is 63 hours. The pre-World War II average was *over 70 hours*. Meanwhile, the pay scale is going up. The starting salary for big-city firemen these days usually exceeds \$5800 a year—up from \$4350 in 1957.

A 63-hour work-week may seem long. But most cities operate their fire departments on the basis of 24-hour shifts. A fireman may work from 8 A.M. Sunday to 8 A.M. Monday, and do the same on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. He then

has the rest of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday off. And he does not have to work from 8 A.M. that Sunday until 8 A.M. the next Wednesday. During his long shifts, moreover, he can sleep and eat whenever there's no fire to be fought. All in all, the schedule gives him 20 full days off out of every 32—about twice the number of holidays a man gets on the usual 8-hour-a-day, 5-day-a-week schedule.

One police authority, consultant Edwin O. Griffenhagen of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, has said: "It's unbelievable how much public money is wasted in the firehouse on checkers and betting the horses." A detailed study made by San Diego in 1959 showed that firemen there, on a 63-hour work-week, spent 35.9% of their duty hours eating and sleeping; 31.5% on standby; 21.1% on various maintenance chores; and 8.6% in drill or training. Firemen spent only 1.3% of the work-week responding to alarms, only 1.6% in reconditioning equipment after use. But more: Less than half the time spent answering alarms involved the use of fire hose. The rest of the time it was either a false alarm or a service call, or the fire was already out by the time the equipment arrived or could be put out with a hand extinguisher.

In sum, the fireman's work-week is being shortened and his pay increased. At the same time, urbanization is increasing. So it's really not surprising that the nation's ability to cope with fire is becoming a scandal. Last year, fires killed some 12,000 people in the United States (half of them children) and did over \$1.8 billion worth of property damage. Though fire fatalities aren't much greater today, property losses have doubled since 1950. And fire authorities agree that much of this toll, both in human and financial terms, is due to undermanned departments. Warren Y. Kimball, fire-service department manager of the N.F.P.A., contends: "In the vast majority of cities, the undermanning of fire companies is so critical as to cripple the ability of the fire department to promptly combat anything more than the smallest fires." John A. Neale, retired chief engineer of the National Board of Fire Underwriters in New York, asserts: "With the exception of a handful of our largest cities, not one city

or town fire department in the United States is adequately manned, and it's getting worse as the work-week gets shorter."

Curiously, fire officials often find it easier to get new apparatus than to get the funds needed to staff the equipment they already have. There's a certain amount of reassurance in seeing a solid piece of equipment, in contrast to just seeing a name on a payroll. Economics is another reason: It's cheaper to buy a new firetruck than to hire a fireman. Even a \$30,000 vehicle, which has an average life of 15 years, works out to only \$2000 a year—less than half what it costs to pay a rookie fireman these days for the same span of service. Indeed, firetrucks have become so ample, in relation to firemen, they've come to be known as the fire departments' "\$30,000 taxis"—because in so many communities they're transporting firemen *individually* to the scene.

* * *

What's the answer? The best solution, I think, is *not* spending more money. As it is, the Bureau of the Census reports that the nation's municipalities shelled out nearly \$1 billion last year on fire protection—twice the amount spent as recently as 1952. Only education and policing take bigger chunks from our local tax dollar than fire protection.

The answer lies in getting more for the money we *already* spend. And since over 80% of fire-department spending goes for wages, that means the fireman's time must be used more effectively.

More than 70 small and medium-sized municipalities in the United States and Canada have found a way to do just that: They've turned the trick by combining their police and fire forces into a single unit. Often it's known as the "public safety" department.

The idea is very simple: One man does both jobs. For example, a "public safetyman" serves in a patrol car until he's summoned by radio to a fire. He keeps a helmet, coat, and boots in his car, as well as a fire extinguisher, hydrant wrenches, rope, and other emergency gear. A skeleton crew stays in the stationhouse to drive the equipment where it's needed. Thus, there are more policemen available when they're needed, and more

firemen when *they're* needed. And since police and fire services together account for close to 20% of the municipal budget, the savings can be enormous.

This combination promises more than economy. "A Decade of Public Safety," a brochure issued by Sunnyvale, California, in 1960, shows that the public-safetyman on patrol often gets to the scene of the fire *ahead* of his station-based counterpart. The first two patrol cars that arrived at fires in one 6-month period took an average of just 2.6 minutes to get there—compared with 3.3 minutes for the first firetruck. Forty-two seconds can be a lot of time when it comes to saving human life.

But, skeptics ask, won't thieves set fires around town to divert public-safetymen from the scene of an intended crime? The strategy was actually used in the theft of \$120,000 from a credit union in a town in Quebec, which operated under a public-safety system. The thieves were successful. But public-safety authorities point out that catching an arsonist is extremely difficult under *any* circumstances. Besides, diversionary tactics like this won't make it any easier to commit a crime if the public-safety department is fully manned. Very few criminals, in addition, are willing to add arson to their list of crimes.

As far as coincidence goes, it is exceedingly unusual for both a fire and a crime to occur at the same moment. Even if it does happen, the community is no more vulnerable than it would be if it operated separate police and fire departments.

* * *

The idea of a combined department is not new. But it has been fought vigorously, and with some success, especially by firemen's unions and fire chiefs. They don't relish the prospect of police assignments, or the down-playing of the fireman's role and authority. As a result, the idea has rarely received the fair test it deserves. Where it *has* been tried, though, it has been almost invariably acclaimed.

All told, in at least some measure, over 70 cities in the United States and Canada are currently operating combined police and fire services. Shawinigan Falls in Quebec has been doing so since it was incorporated in 1901. The oldest

combined department still operating in the United States is in Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan, which dates its effort from 1911. Public administrators, taxpayer groups, and safety authorities in these communities are overwhelmingly enthusiastic in its behalf. George E. Bean, who has served as city manager for over 25 years in three different cities (including one with a combined department), once described the operation of separate police and fire departments in small and medium-sized communities as "the biggest economic waste in local government today."

Public Safety Director Glenford Leonard of Oak Park, Michigan, which instituted combined service in 1954, reports that the plan saves the City about \$36,000 a year—about a dollar per resident. He also notes that the combined operation possibly helped boost the City's fire rating from 7 to grade 5. The City's crime rate didn't suffer, either. In addition, he reports: "We *requested* mutual aid from nearby communities only once, but *provided* it to other municipalities on 10 occasions in a 7-year period." The combined operation also helped the City hike its pay scales for police and fire work, "which attracted a higher caliber of recruit prepared to do both these jobs."

The Citizens Research Council of Michigan, which took a close look at the Oak Park operation, came away with the conviction that the citizens were receiving "a substantially higher level of service from the integrated public-safety department than would be possible for the same cost under the traditionally separate police and fire departments."

A report issued shortly thereafter by the Governmental Research Institute of Cleveland stated: "No city should dismiss the public-safety concept offhand as impractical."

Another report, by Port Huron, Michigan, stated: "The integration of the police and fire departments offers a solution to the problem facing cities trying to improve those services. It makes possible increased patrol of the city without reducing the number of men available for fire service; it provides faster response to fire alarms; it distributes the emergency services and preventive duties over the maximum number of

personnel. In short, integration makes the maximum use of the total personnel of a public-safety establishment and directs the activities of those men toward the total solution of the total problem."

Many policemen, of course, just don't like fighting fires and many firemen don't like handling weapons. But public-safety adherents argue that recruiting techniques can overcome these problems, and that the two tasks do not require inherently different techniques. Higher pay and better hours, they say, make the recruiting problem infinitely easier.

* * *

What happens when a city of any substantial size attempts to gather the facts on police-fire combination is well illustrated by the recent case of San Diego. After many months of study, the City Council in mid-1961 decided to table indefinitely any further consideration of the plan. This, despite public pronouncements by the San Diego Taxpayers' Association and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce that the measure warranted more study. Why was the subject so summarily discarded? Simply because of strong opposition from firemen and their unions.

One misconception that the firemen's unions try to foist upon the public is that fire-insurance rates in municipalities with combined departments always go up, and their fire ratings always go down. Not long ago, for instance, the *California Firemen*—published by the California Firemen's Association—stated: "Fire insurance rates are far higher in cities with integrated departments." I myself went to the final authority—the National Board of Fire Underwriters, which issues fire ratings for insurance purposes. I was told that the board knew of *no* instance where the combination of departments had led to either higher insurance or a lower fire rating. The Missouri Public Expenditures Council, after a comprehensive survey, reported it was totally unable to find "one city that had been penalized because of unification." Indeed, at least two cities with combined police-fire operations dating back more than a decade—Sunnyvale, California, and Oak Park, Michigan—have *improved* their fire ratings.

Another misconception the firemen's unions seek to perpetrate is that cities that have tried the plan promptly gave it up. A pamphlet published by the International Association of Fire Fighters, A.F.L.-C.I.O., in Washington states on its very first page: "Almost without exception, those communities that have given the plan a trial have returned to separate fire and police departments."

The Cleveland Governmental Research Institute states exactly the contrary in its report: "Only 15 of 88 cities credited with some form of integration later abandoned the effort. Seventy-three—42 in the U.S. and 31 in Canada—still have it in operation." I talked with city managers, councilmen, police chiefs, and editors in several of these cities that did abandon the public-safety plan, and learned that some (Chicago, San Marino, and Fremont) never did much beyond naming a safety director to head the two departments. Others, I learned, were forced to undo their efforts to combine because of dissatisfaction among department personnel. In Sanger, California, for example, Police Chief Carl Armstrong said the combination service was discarded in 1956 "mainly because of the opposition of personnel in the department."

Despite the general success and the undeniable benefits of combined police-fire departments, this plan will never be put into wide use unless public opinion can override the pressure of the firemen's unions. In Massachusetts, the International Association of Fire Fighters managed to get a law passed prohibiting combined departments in municipalities with populations over 40,000. The Illinois legislature almost passed such a measure in 1959, only to have it vetoed by then-Governor William G. Stratton. So strong are the firemen's unions that they prevented Seattle from even considering the combination plan. In 1958, the renowned management-consulting firm of Booz, Allen & Hamilton recommended that Seattle consider combining police and fire services in at least one section of the City. The advice was never followed. A member of the City Council at the time explains why it wasn't: "All we had to do was to try it—and the next legislature would have outlawed it. Firemen in this state get practically anything they want. And

it's not much different in other states, either."

But the firemen's unions are certainly not more powerful than an aroused public would be. And if the reader wants to learn whether his *own* local fire department is seriously undermanned, all he has to do is count the number of firemen on a firetruck the next time it answers a call.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, if a firetruck has only two men and a driver, the equipment simply cannot be operated anywhere near as efficiently as it was meant to operate.

The National Board of Fire Underwriters spells it out even more clearly. On the basis of a half-century of fire experience, the board maintains that *five* firemen are needed on every pumper truck, and *six* firemen are needed on every aerial-ladder truck.

* * *

Once the public has been sufficiently informed of the advantages of combined police and fire departments, some think there will be no stopping the idea. Municipalities now using public-safety

forces range in size from tiny Sewickley Heights in Pennsylvania, with a population of 1000, to Dearborn, Michigan, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina, whose populations exceeded 100,000 at the time they combined their departments. A public-safety department can give full-time protection to the many cities that now depend on volunteers—20,000 of the nation's 22,000 fire departments. Fast-growing communities with soaring police and fire needs and burgeoning budgets are also excellent prospects. Small and medium-size municipalities plagued with inadequate fire and police service might also benefit. Big cities could have a combined department in their outlying areas, which are often no different from small cities, if not in their dense, high-value cores.

All the heat and smoke the firemen's unions generate to the contrary, there's no question but that the concept of a combined police-fire department deserves a better hearing than it has been getting in most of America's communities.

Certainly the cities that have actually *tried* the plan have not the slightest doubt of it.

Dear Editor:

Random House and Mr. Hotchner carefully edited the manuscript of PAPA HEMINGWAY to avoid errors. Random House knows of no errors. The book does contain a few changes of name (designated as such) made purposely to avoid embarrassment and one name change by request.

Incidentally, Mrs. Hemingway had every opportunity--in her application for a preliminary injunction to restrain publication of the book--to set forth all claimed factual errors. At that time she made a vague and unproved accusation, just as she has now done in your magazine article.

On this subject, Judge Harry B. Frank of the New York Supreme Court, whose decision denying Mrs. Hemingway's application was unanimously affirmed on appeal, commented: "Plaintiff's bare allusion to 'misstatements of fact' without further specification or particularization is wholly insufficient..."

Bennett Cerf, Chairman of the Board
Random House
New York, New York

Fact:

Since there is only one fact cited in Mary's article, that's all there is to consider. This time Mary claims 183 errors of fact in the book (in various letters and assorted diatribes this figure jumps around from 46 to 22 to 87, pretty much the way Joe McCarthy used to tote up Commies in the Senate) but in her article she gives only one example of these 183 errors. That example is that I stated in the book that I was in Havana in 1957, and Mary goes to great lengths to prove, triumphantly, that I was not.

On page 12 of my book, the following appears: "Over the years with the exception of 1956 and 1957,

when I was living in Rome, I visited Ernest in Cuba at least once a year...." Since that is the only example of the 183 errors (she may raise it to 283 by next week), I can presume that all of Mary's errors are based on such "facts." Mary says she won't list any more of these 183 "errors" because then I could correct them and "edge his work toward veracity." I hope that's a promise.

Incidentally, Mary states that she checked her diaries and finds that I'm not in them "1/100th of the time he insinuates he was consistently at Ernest's side." I'm sure she's right, that I'm not in her diary very much, because most of the good times I wrote about in the book did not include Mary.

A.E. Hotchner
New York, N.Y.

Fact:

It is true ("Situation Wanted," May-June) that the public is misinformed about the value of parole. Successful parolees rarely make headlines; it is the parole violator whom the public remembers. Also, parole people--like myself--for too long have not publicized the beneficial protection to the community and the rehabilitation of criminal offenders that parole affords.

My own approach has changed. Wherever possible, I present the facts and let my audience judge for themselves. The accomplishments of ex-convicts are, in the long run, far more impressive than modern and costly prisons.

John J. Quinn, chairman
Parole Commission, City of New York



The Man Who Stood Up

By Sylvia Alberts

Jim Peck has had his jaw broken and his head bashed in, and he's gotten tuberculosis while in jail. What dangerous job does he have? Why, he's a pacifist!

The Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria is an unusual setting for an act of civil disobedience. Certainly the 1500 guests who assembled there one night last February, after paying \$25 each, were not expecting anything more dramatic than the customary five- or six-course dinner, followed by about the same number of after-dinner speakers. In addition, of course, there was the privilege of being in the same room with the guest of honor, the President of the United States. The occasion was the presentation of the Freedom House Award to Mr. Johnson, and the highlight of the evening was to be his acceptance speech: a 7-page apologia for his Vietnam policies.

In the rear of the ballroom, at table No. 95, one of the dinner guests was sitting quietly. From time to time he glanced at the wall, where plainclothes detectives and Secret Service men stood in pairs only a few yards away. When the speeches began, he hitched his chair around so that a few more feet separated him from the guards. He sat silently through four long speeches. He had entered the ballroom at 7 o'clock; not until 9:30 was the President introduced. The dinner guests rose to applaud, the detectives stood alert. As the applause faded and the audience resumed their seats, the man at table No. 95 climbed onto his chair, took off his jacket, and shouted in a clear voice heard on radio and TV across the country:

"Mr. President, peace in Vietnam! Please, Mr. President, peace in Vietnam!" For those who didn't hear, the same message was painted on the front and back of his shirt—*Peace in Vietnam*. He was able to shout it twice again before he was seized, handcuffed, and carried from the room. The detectives silenced him by stuffing a napkin in his mouth, cutting his lip and cheek in the process. Afterwards, an official of Freedom House said that the man's act had been very dangerous: Secret Service agents, remembering Dallas, might have shot first and asked questions later. One reporter even asked the man if he meant to harm the President. "Of course not," he replied. "I wouldn't harm anybody. I'm a pacifist."

The man who stood up was Jim Peck. He has been standing up for 30 years now, on picket lines, protest marches, and peace vigils, and he has also sat-in, bussed-in, sailed-in, and been jailed-in. For all of his adult life, Jim Peck has been a fully-committed, full-time pacifist. He has spent 30 years in active service, voluntary and unpaid, in the cause of conscience.

Because of Jim Peck's demonstration at the Waldorf, he was charged with "disturbing a lawful meeting" and "resisting arrest." (His "resistance" consisted of going limp.) He pleaded not guilty and was held in \$3000 bail. On March 21, Judge Joseph Martinis (the same Martinis

whose son was almost instantaneously acquitted of vehicular homicide a few years ago) found him guilty on both counts. On May 9 he was sentenced to 60 days in jail.

While Peck was in the Manhattan House of Detention, before being sent to jail at Harts Island, his wife went down to ask that her husband's health needs be considered — he had tuberculosis once, and for the past 3 years he's had stomach ulcers. As she tells it: "I had to wait for 25 minutes in front of a window before anyone paid any attention to me. Not that there was any line—nobody was ahead of me. Finally an officer appeared on the other side of the glass—very thick glass. You couldn't make yourself heard through it. He had to turn on some sort of public-address thing before we could talk. I told him my husband is a sick man, that he has ulcers, that the doctors said that he has to have milk. And I also wanted to see if he could get the paper every day — Jim can't get along without the *New York Times*. But the officer just kept saying the same thing over and over—'Lady, this man doesn't exist.'"

* * *

A few weeks before Jim Peck officially ceased to exist, he sat in his apartment on Riverside Drive and talked to me for an hour or so. Peck is in his 50s, but looks about 45, partly because he has all his hair—light brown and beginning to gray a little now. His face is reminiscent of Bogart's, with the same blurred and battered look. He's about average height, but extremely thin, and his sunken chest and stooped shoulders contribute to an impression of great vulnerability. He talks slowly, in a deep, sometimes hesitant, rather rough-edged voice. He takes his time answering questions, but he's not evasive. You get the feeling that he's incapable of insincerity, that he would answer honestly any question put to him.

His wife, Paula, is a dark, plump, pretty woman with bright brown eyes and a wide and easy smile. She too has the quality of candor, of having nothing to hide. There are two sons — Sam, who's 16½, and Charles, 14—both good-looking boys, lively teen-agers with loose shirt-tails and tight schedules. How do they feel about their father's activities? Peck says, "Well, they're

pretty much involved with their own world, you know. Busy in school—they both go to Fieldston. I think they wish I had an ordinary job like other fathers. No, they're not activists. They haven't joined me on the picket line and they don't have any strong antiwar feelings. I can't insist on these things, you know—you can't force them. But the younger one, Charles came home one day and showed me an article he'd cut from the *New York Post*—about a Negro soldier who'd been killed in Vietnam, and when the mailman or messenger went to deliver the message to his father down South, he found he was a very poor old man who couldn't read. So the messenger had to read the notification to the father, who broke down. Charles was moved by the story."

Jim Peck was talking to me on April 16, the morning after most citizens part with a certain percentage of their income. On April 15 he was on a picket line in front of the Internal Revenue Service office in lower Manhattan. He always refuses to pay his taxes. The money, he feels, is put to military uses and he will not support the war effort. The government collects by simply attaching a portion of his income from his father's estate. "I'm fortunate in having an independent income," he says. "All the work I've done for civil rights and pacifist organizations has been on a volunteer basis. I've written a couple of books—one of them is out of print, but the other, *Freedom Ride*, is doing pretty well in paperback. My wife is a more successful author than I am, though. She has a cookbook in its sixth edition now, and another one's coming out soon."

Mrs. Peck's kitchen is a wonderful place, filled with a profusion of pots, ladles, bowls, knives—every possible utensil. The living room is bright with travel posters (the Pecks get to Europe for a couple of weeks most summers) and so full of green plants that you feel almost outdoors. Mrs. Peck says, "Oh, these are nothing. I used to have lots more — little greenhouses all over the apartment. And we used to have lots of dogs, too. This one is the last of the litter. At one time we had seven puppies here, can you imagine?" The one remaining is a standard schnauzer named Lucky, very friendly. After her initial bark, she settles down in the sunlight coming

through the windows.

Mrs. Peck believes that one activist in the family is enough, though she too is a pacifist. When a reporter asked her if she didn't think her husband's action at the Waldorf was "a little bit drastic," she responded, "Don't you think *our* actions in Vietnam are a little drastic, too?" Usually her husband is very considerate about telling her beforehand what he's planning to do and whether there will be any trouble, "but he didn't tell me about that Waldorf thing." She is not at all discontent with her husband's activities, though abusive phone calls in the middle of the night can be a problem. "The worst was when I got a crank call that said he was dead. Fortunately, he walked in a few minutes later."

The Pecks' living-room windows face the Hudson and would afford a view of the river if the West Side Highway didn't intervene. As it is, there's a view across the river to Palisades Amusement Park in New Jersey—a view that has, for Jim Peck, many associations.

Palisades Park boasts the largest salt-water pool in the world, but until the summer of 1949 it wasn't big enough to accommodate any Negroes. In those days, a white man who felt like a little "surf bathing" could simply buy a ticket and jump in; a Negro was advised to join the "Sun and Surf Club." If he pursued the matter and made an application to this mythical club, he was told that he would be notified by mail of his admission. That notification never came.

In the summer of 1947, CORE decided to make something of a splash. As Jim Peck tells it in his book *Freedom Ride*,

New Jersey is a long way from Alabama. Yet, if an observer had stopped off there on certain summer Sundays and witnessed the violence to which CORE members were subjected, he would have believed himself transported to the heart of the South. . . .

On August 3, seven of our group were beaten by park guards and arrested at the pool ticket booth. Four others were seized as they started to picket at the entrance gate. While police pinned back my arms, a very fat guard beat me, fracturing a rib and making a deep cut over my left eye. . . .

It got so that each Sunday when we went to Palisades, we knew in advance that we would be beaten, arrested, or both. As I stood in the crowded bus climbing

the steep hill from the ferry to the park gate, I would gird myself in the same way I do when a dentist is about to apply his drill to an open-nerved tooth.

On one occasion, a park guard approached me and announced, "I'd like to kill you!" The next thing I knew, I was in the police station—20 minutes later. The guard had knocked me unconscious and broken my jaw.

It took two summers of picketing and many lawsuits in both state and federal court before the Palisades pool was available to any citizen, regardless of color.

* * *

Where does a man find the courage to stand up to this treatment? For some, the source is religion. Jim Peck is an atheist. For others, it's total commitment to a powerful ideology. Jim Peck is non-political (though he did, ironically, vote for Johnson). His closest philosophical affinity to any social organization, he says, is for the old International Workers of the World, which declined long before he reached his teens. Nor is his crusading inherited from a family tradition. His father died when Peck was 11; his mother was ultraconservative in her views on war, labor, and particularly race. She would not even have a colored maid in the house because she said Negroes were "dirty" and "thieving."

James Douglas Peck was born on December 19, 1914, in New York City, an only child. His father was active in real-estate, a wholesale clothing concern, and other businesses. The family lived in the East 60s—the "best" of the New York neighborhoods. There were servants and there was every possible luxury. Perhaps too much luxury for the solitary boy. He grew up encased in wealth and isolated by it, fatherless and estranged from his mother. He remembers her as a society woman, scornful of all who were not in her immediate circle, and cold. For warmth, the boy turned to one of his mother's servants, a Frenchwoman named Angèle, who remained close to him until her death a few years ago. But for the most part, he remembers his early years as a chilly time.

Back in the early 1930s, when Jim Peck was in his teens, he read a book and a pamphlet. The book was *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and its presentation of the First World War through the eyes of those who had been the en-

emy was a revelation to him. The pamphlet, "Arms and the Men," was a reprint of an article that had appeared in *Fortune Magazine*. It told in detail how the big munitions-makers had helped promote World War I, then had sold their products to both sides. To Peck, it was concrete proof that war is a ruthless racket.

While he was still an adolescent, his mother sent him to a stuffy prep school, Lawrenceville, near Princeton. There the cautious conformism of both teachers and students repelled him. Next he went to Harvard—he was 16—where his rebellion found a new expression: He took a Negro girl to the freshman dance. She wore, he recalls, a red dress. The sombrely dressed Boston matrons on the sidelines stared and whispered and stared again.

A year at Harvard was enough to convince Peck that his place was in the outside world. He left school, he left home, and went to sea. It was as a seaman that he got his first taste of what was to become for him almost a full-time occupation—picketing. The Seamen's Union was on strike, and Peck marched on the Chelsea piers. He remembers the date—March 22, 1936—(he still has that first picket card) and he remembers, too, the brutality of the police. "Cops just rode their horses into the midst of the strikers and started swinging their clubs," he recalls. "The only other comparable instance—in the North, I mean (these things happen more often in the South)—was in 1962, when the same thing happened in Times Square. It was a mass demonstration against nuclear tests. I had the experience of being clubbed by mounted police who simply rode, head-on, into the crowds—without provocation."

Experiences such as these strengthened Peck's conviction that nonviolence is the only possible answer to force, especially in a world which, in the late '30s, was growing more and more violent. Then the Spanish Civil War broke out. Here was the clearest possible injustice: reactionary forces, aided by Hitler and Mussolini, against the Loyalists, desperately outnumbered and fighting with a gallantry that aroused freedom-lovers all over the world. Some years after, it was possible for Peck to reflect that a Loyalist victory might have meant a Communist dictator-

ship rather than Franco's; but at the time he was strongly tempted to go to Spain and volunteer his services as a noncombatant. It was only after much painful thought that he stayed out of the war, donating an ambulance instead.

The outbreak of World War II caused him no such ambivalence. To Peck this was another businessman's war. Not that Peck was blind to the menace of Hitler, but the pacifist position is clear-cut: War is a crime against humanity, and to support *any* war is to participate in that crime. From the outset of World War II, Peck knew that he had to be a conscientious objector. He also knew that without religious grounds for his stand, he would be jailed. Nevertheless, on Oct. 6, 1940, the first registration day, Jim Peck wrote on his draft card the words "conscientious objector" and read a statement of his principles to the press. He was given a high draft number and 2 years passed before he received those "Greetings." He replied with the same statement he had made on registration day, and in November, 1942, he was sentenced to 3 years at Danbury.

* * *

The Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury, Connecticut, is surrounded by lawns and flowerbeds. The buildings are modern and light. There are no outer walls, no guard towers, not even bars in the windows. But as the former chief psychiatrist at Sing Sing, Dr. Ralph S. Banay, has said, "Prisons today are in essence still medieval institutions. There has been little change in the mental torment and emotional damage that have always been the lot of those whom society locks away." Jim Peck tells the story of his years spent locked away in his book *We Who Would Not Kill*: "According to my experience, the utter monotony and aimlessness of prison life—month after month, year after year—by itself constitutes considerable 'mental torment and emotional damage.' On the outside a person becomes restless if he has an unoccupied hour to pass between two appointments or waiting for the next train. In jail, even when one is not in solitary confinement, the unoccupied hours to pass are endless. If judges were required to do time, even for a very brief period, as part of their training, they would be far more careful in imposing sentence."

The years Peck spent in prison were not entirely wasted. Along with 22 other C.O.s, Peck participated in a work strike that lasted for 135 days and ended in total victory for the strikers: Danbury became the first Federal prison to abolish segregated seating in its messhall. As Peck wrote: "It seems to me that the campaign against racial discrimination may be counted as one of the most important accomplishments of C.O.s in World War II."

* * *

When Jim Peck walked out of Danbury he confronted a number of closed doors. Before being sent to prison, he had worked as a reporter for a news service; he'd been told the job would be available when he came out. It wasn't. On the other hand, he did have some good luck—he began working full-time for the War Resisters League, a pacifist group; and he married a woman who shared his beliefs. Appropriately, they met at a street-meeting during an antidraft demonstration.

During the late '40s, Peck put in a number of miles on picket lines, "At Christmas of 1946," he recalls, "we picketed the White House wearing old-style, black-and-white-striped prison suits. It was to dramatize an appeal for amnesty for conscientious objectors who were still in prison. We'd rented the suits from a theatrical company. Very effective. A year or so later, on the same issue, we picketed in funeral attire carrying a coffin marked 'justice.' And in 1948, when the peacetime-conscription bill was pending, we rented Uncle Sam suits and goosestepped in front of the White House with signs reading, 'The Draft Means a Goosestepping U.S.' It's very tiring on the legs, goosestepping, but when we saw the publicity, we figured the demonstration was worthwhile.

"We'd never had a peacetime draft and I knew that it was more than a temporary measure. I knew that once it was signed into law, it would be permanent."

This conviction led Peck to make a dramatic protest in June, 1948. He tells the story in *We Who Would Not Kill*:

A few days before President Truman signed the 1948 draft law, I decided to put on a shirt bearing the

inscription "Veto the Draft" and chain myself to the White House steps. I realized that this action might be interpreted as crackpot by some and I saw the danger of the authorities discrediting the demonstration by sending me to an institution for observation. On the other hand, it might prove a forceful protest action which would get plenty of publicity. I decided to take a chance.

An artist friend painted the slogan "Veto the Draft" on my shirt and I bought a chain and padlock at a hardware store. The following morning I took the train for Washington.

My shirt was concealed by a coat and tie. The chain and padlock were hidden by the sleeves of the shirt. I entered the White House with the many other visitors. I went through once to examine the lay-out of the staircase and to choose a place where I would have time to remove my coat and tie and secure the padlock to the bannister before any of the guards could stop me.

I decided on a place about half-way up the staircase. On my second trip, I halted at that place, took off my coat, and secured the chain. For several minutes the guards didn't notice me. Big crowds of White House visitors were streaming up the stairs. I started handing out some anti-conscription leaflets which I had brought along.

After what seemed to be about 5 minutes, two guards came. They started to yank at the chain. It was not sufficiently thick and within a few minutes it parted. The two guards then escorted me down the stairs and across the street to Secret Service headquarters, where I was grilled for a couple of hours on every conceivable topic.

At one point during the questioning, a man who had been looking into a file cabinet across the room swung around and shouted: "Where's your card?"

"What card do you mean?" I asked.

"Your Communist Party card," he growled, and with that he rushed over and started to shake me down like they do in prison. He even looked inside my socks.

Ordinary citizens as well as Secret Service agents tend to confuse all demonstrators with Communists. "Go back to Russia!" is frequently shouted at pickets. One heckler yelled "Go back to Russia!" at Peck while he was picketing the Soviet Embassy in New York protesting the Russian nuclear test in 1962.

In 1958, Jim Peck and four other pacifists set out from Honolulu in a 30-foot ketch they called the "Golden Rule." They were planning to sail to the Pacific island where the hydrogen bomb was to be detonated and risk their lives in protest. The Federal Government got a court injunction to stop the ketch from sailing, but the men managed to get 6 miles out before they were

apprehended. They were brought back to Honolulu and given 60 days in jail. Honolulu, now that it's part of the United States, has an up-to-date jail full of the latest modern conveniences. In 1958, the jail was a decrepit antique. Peck contracted tuberculosis during his 60-day sentence. He spent the next year recuperating.

His closest brush with death, however, has come not from microbes but from men. This is how he tells it in *Freedom Ride*:

The most nightmarish day of our 1961 Freedom Ride was Sunday, May 14, Mother's Day. I identify the date with Mother's Day because when Police Chief Connor was asked why there was not a single policeman at the Birmingham Trailways terminal to avert mob violence, he explained that since it was Mother's Day, most of the police were off-duty visiting their mothers. That there was going to be a mob to meet us had been well-known around Birmingham for several days. . . .

However, we did not know in advance that a similar mob was waiting in Anniston, a rest stop on the way. When the first bus pulled into Anniston, it was immediately surrounded by an angry mob armed with iron bars. They set upon the vehicle, denting the sides, breaking windows, and slashing tires. Finally the police arrived and the bus managed to get away. But the mob pursued it in cars, forced it to pull over, and within minutes had hurled a bomb through the broken rear window.

All the passengers managed to escape before the bus burst into flames and was totally destroyed. Policemen, who had been standing by, belatedly came on the scene. A couple of them fired shots in the air. The mob dispersed and the injured were taken to a local hospital. The Freedom Riders were finally transported to Birmingham in cars. . . .

I was on the second bus which arrived in Anniston an hour later. We learned what had happened when eight hoodlums climbed aboard and stood by the driver as he made a brief announcement. He concluded by stating that he would refuse to drive on unless the Negroes in our group moved to the formerly segregated rear seats. They remained quietly in their front seats. The hoodlums cursed and started to move them bodily to the rear, kicking and hitting them at the same time.

Walter Bergman, a retired professor, and I were seated toward the rear. We moved forward and tried to persuade the hoodlums to desist. We too were pushed, punched, and kicked. I found myself face downward on the floor of the bus. Someone was on top of me. I was bleeding. Bergman's jaw was cut and swollen. Mrs. Bergman, who observed the beating, commented later, "I had never before heard the sound of human flesh being hit. It was terrible."

Finally, all of our group had been forced to the back of the bus. The hoodlums sat in the very front. The seats in between remained empty. At that point the driver agreed to proceed to Birmingham. Some of us doubted whether he would really head there or turn up some obscure side road for another mob scene. For the entire 2-hour ride to Birmingham, the hoodlums craned their necks to make sure we didn't move into any of the empty rows of front seats.

Upon arrival in Birmingham, I could see a mob lined up on the sidewalk only a few feet from the loading platform. Most of them were young—in their 20s. Some were carrying ill-concealed iron bars. A few were older men. All had hate showing on their faces. . . .

As we entered the white waiting-room and approached the lunch counter, we were grabbed bodily and pushed toward the alleyway leading to the loading platform. As soon as we got into the alleyway and out of sight of onlookers in the waiting-room, six of them started swinging at me with fists and pipes. . . . Within seconds, I was unconscious on the ground.

When Peck regained consciousness, he was alone in that alleyway. "I didn't know," he says today, "whether I would live or die and, frankly, I didn't care. I don't know, maybe because I was so tired. All that blood."

He was on the operating table in Birmingham for 8 hours. It took 53 stitches to close his wounds.

* * *

For many years Peck has been working full-time for the War Resisters League, packing and shipping peace literature and editing the bimonthly *WRL News*. The War Resisters League, founded in 1923, is the American branch of War Resisters International, a world-wide pacifist movement that encompasses 23 nations. The American branch now has more than 6000 members, among them A.J. Muste (a man so pacifist he once said, "If I cannot love Hitler, I cannot love at all"), Negro leader Bayard Rustin, and draft-card burner David McReynolds. All members of the League are conscientious objectors and many have served long terms in C.O. camps or prisons.

The W.R.L. headquarters is in lower Manhattan, on the tenth floor of an old office building—the elevator gives out at the ninth floor, and visitors must negotiate the last lap on foot, climbing a narrow wooden stairway to confront a door plastered with signs reading "Committee for

Non-Violent Action," "Student Peace Union," "Fellowship of Reconciliation," "Summerhill," "New York Workshop in Non-Violence," and of course "War Resisters League." There is also an admonishment to "Make Love, Not War"; someone has inserted between "Make" and "Love" the word "Free."

When Jim Peck gets out of prison, he will return to work here, and probably with more enthusiasm than ever. The War Resisters League seems to be making headway: According to Peck, "We get letters every day, and phone calls. People come in off the street to ask what they can do." In the last 5 years, membership has doubled.

Jim Peck has excellent qualifications for advising today's conscientious objectors. "Ordinary youngsters can identify with him," says Ralph DiGia, administrative secretary of the War Resisters League and a man who has known Peck for 20 years. "He's a conscientious objector, but he's not religious. Jim doesn't think a C.O. has to be a saint. He drinks occasionally, and smokes, and has a fine sense of humor. He's a regular guy." In still another way Jim Peck is admirably suited to advise today's conscientious objectors. Once, in a ceremony in front of the White House, Peck and several associates publicly burned their draft cards. The year was 1947.

* * *

Although Jim Peck is really an uncomplicated man, a man intensely preoccupied with one great cause, he is not easy to explain or to pigeonhole. It is true that a person estranged or separated from his parents often develops in unusual ways, because he has no firm model to pattern himself after, and must develop an identity of his own, on his own. It is true that such a man, more than the rest of us, needs approval from within, since he did not, as a child, receive the approval he needed from outside. Still, this does not entirely explain why Jim Peck is the man he is—as a friend of his described him, "a Dostoevsky character," a truly honest and loving Prince Mishkin whom virtually everyone considers an "idiot," though in truth he is one of the few really sane people living.

I asked Jim Peck, before he was jailed, "How have you been able to take all these beat-

ings without fighting back?" He conceded that he has almost always felt an impulse to retaliate. "But," he added, "I've found that it can be curbed by a complete realization of the futility of violence. Anger is a natural response to physical pain. But when I'm attacked, my reaction has come to be a sick feeling inside, a sort of overpowering nausea caused by the spectacle of physical violence. During beatings I try to cover my head with my arms as best I can. Afterwards, the sick feeling remains. On some occasions I actually vomited. But on every occasion, I felt that my remaining nonviolent has proved worthwhile."

When I asked him if he considered himself a pessimist, his answer was a reluctant "Yes." He elaborated: "I'd call it more realism than pessimism. Things *do* get better. I *have* seen results. We had the Freedom Rides and now interstate travel *is* unsegregated. There are gains. They may seem small, but they're gains. We've demonstrated against the bomb and we have a test-ban treaty. And there are many more pacifists today than there were in 1958."

Finally, I asked him how he "got that way." To him, it was a matter of chance—and conviction. "I decided a long time ago," he said, "that my principles were important to me, the most important thing I had. I suppose the most valuable people in the world are the creative ones—artists, writers, architects. The rest of us who aren't creative, who don't have talents, ought to do the next-best thing: Work to make the world a little better."

Dear Sirs:

I am a junior at Marquette who attended two secular colleges before coming here. I believe that there have been important changes since Mr. Peabody's days as an undergraduate.

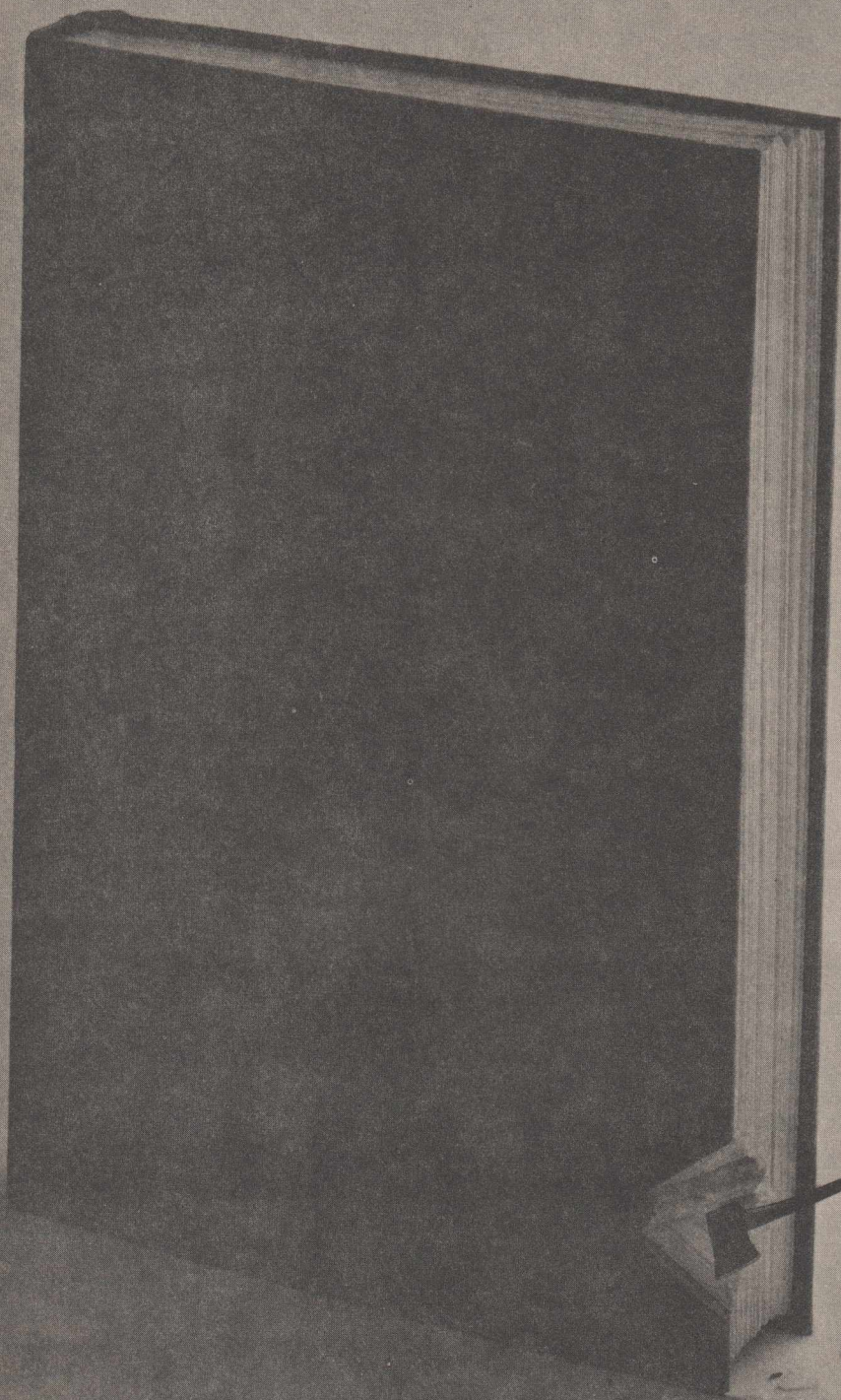
Marquette is Catholic, and this aura of Catholicism is still omnipresent. But there are enough good students and instructors to aid the infiltration of open-mindedness. If Mr. Peabody's time was wasted, I can't help but feel it was his own fault.

Gerald L. Nicholson
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Editor:

The Mason Peabody article on Catholic college miseducation was beautifully done, well researched and authenticated.

N.M. Fybish, D.O.
New York, New York



Book Reviews in Review

By Kenneth Rexroth

A noted poet and critic maintains that American critical writing is a scandal, and the key reason is that "Books in America are commodities, no different from Rice Krispies and Thunderbirds"

There is far more literary criticism published in America than literature. Most literary magazines devote most of their space to criticism, and every cow-country university and street-car college bids as high as it can in the annual auction of critics-in-residence. Every institution of higher learning and every would-be regional renaissance issues a magazine given over mostly to criticism. Any author who employs a clipping bureau discovers that there are book reviewers on all the small town papers, from Key West to Cle Elum.

This enormous output is by no means academic, in the old sense. It is perfectly true that there are still people writing papers on "Vestigial Remnants of the Enclitic E in Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach'" and "A Technique for Extrapolating the Names of the Anonymous Passengers on Barclay's *Ship of Fools*," but nowadays the powwows of the sachems of the Modern Language Association are given over to the exegesis, hermeneutics, epigraphy, and linguistic analysis of the Beat Generation, and there exists an indefinite number of doctors' theses on Gregory Corso.

What is wrong with all this immense mass of stuff is its almost total lack of guiding general ideas, of principles of evaluation. Where such things exist they are anachronistic and irrelevant. Nevertheless it is more illuminating to read a neothomist or a Marxist on William Burroughs

or James Gould Cozzens simply because the very existence of a system of values, however inapposite, is a welcome oasis in a desert of ideas.

The creative artist in America is not supposed to have general ideas. They are the province of the professors. What is wrong with the professors is that for them ideas are "subjects," not—as they should be—levers of power. After all, the professors themselves, with all their ideas, are afflicted with an occupational disease—impotence. So the common highbrow vulgar philosophy in the United States, taking its cue from the professors, holds that ideas are not determinative. They come after the act, they are "rationalizations." Therefore the professors believe the analysis of ideas should be value-neuter, itself unmotivated by ideas, especially those that might lead to action.

It is this pseudo-scientific theory of the critical process that lies back of the sterility of the more sophisticated American criticism and filters down to the lowest levels. Over against it there is plenty of evaluation—the ranting of ignorant prejudice, often quite unconscious—but stuff of this sort occupies the field only by default. If criticism in America were divided amongst groups operating from principled positions, there would be little room for the scavenger.

Another widely-diffused refined vulgar highbrow philosophy holds, not that literature is a

symbolic criticism of values, but that it is itself a system of values. This leads immediately to esthetic cannibalism. A good poem is supposedly a poem about itself. Criticism is supposedly criticism of criticism, pure and devoid of extraneous reference. Notions like these are probably derived from the philosophical speculations of two generations ago, a very remote trickling down of the early Wittgenstein and ilk.

Another form of this theory, out of date since the '90s, but now returned to favor, substitutes art for religion. It seeks in works of literature a new theology and confuses the religious and the esthetic experiences. The loquacious detective stories of Dostoevsky, the exquisitely irritable social self-consciousness of Henry James, the fantastic conceit of James Joyce, are equated with the words of Christ or Buddha and treated accordingly by successive generations of scholastic doctors of theology.

So much for the sources of the critical preconceptions and hence the very style of the scholarly and literary magazines. What is essential to understand is that behind all this immense effort, refinement, and solemnity is the initial assumption of ineffectiveness. By this of course I mean ineffectiveness in relation to society as a whole. Certainly the critics are not without effect. They are teachers and their students parrot their teachings when, if ever, they get out into the world where ideas function as stimuli to action. Most of them of course don't get out. They stay in the universities, write book reviews, and perpetuate their kind.

The antecedents of the Establishment account for the emphasis upon fiction, belles-lettres, and left-liberal sociology in the more highbrow organs. The publishers, advertising, and the market press for the emphasis on ephemeral fiction, biography, and journalistic history in the newspapers. Publishers are still hypnotized by *Gone with the Wind* and *Forever Amber*. Ninety percent of all fiction published in America does not make a profit, but 1% still pays immense jackpots, so publishing gears itself to this bingo game and the newspaper supplements play along behind. The liberal weeklies and the *Saturday Review*, especially the latter, make some effort to

deal with the literature of science and new and radical attempts to understand the technological age in which we live. Their audiences are predominantly middlebrow, but that is not really the reason the highbrow critics disdain their coverage of the sciences. They simply aren't interested. Such criticism assumes that ideas are power, and the Establishment intellectual is committed to voluntary impotence.

* * *

This is an approach to the scandal of American critical writing from the top down. It is more significant to work from the bottom up.

Books in America are commodities no different from Rice Krispies and Thunderbirds. Publishing is big business. Selling books is merchandising. Criticism is one department of promotion. It is not even an essential part. A publisher can overcome uniformly bad reviews by turning to other promotion techniques. Many books the publisher knows will be scoffed at by even the most illiterate reviewers are not sent out for review, but promoted by publicity stunts and via "the media," a Madison Avenue singular noun meaning television.

The book pages of all the major newspapers in America must be self-financing. Their book-keeping is separate. They must pay for themselves like concessions, with publishers' and book-store advertising. The book editor spends most of his time finding the money to pay his wages, and usually gets only antagonism from the advertising and promotion departments of his paper. Book-review editors are chosen for these talents, not for any knowledge of literature, and if they turn out not to have them are quickly sent back to the City Room or the sports desk. In most metropolitan dailies, besides running the Sunday book section, the book editor also does a 600-word book review a day. On such a regimen, as 400 or so books a year go by him, he may absorb a kind of dizzied, rattlebrained education, low on information and devoid of value judgments. Mostly such editors are concerned with hanging on to their jobs by persuading the randy middle-aged lady who runs the department-store book section to take a quarter-page ad featuring a nonbook by a randy middle-aged lady with a top-

less neck. You think I'm kidding? Ask any poor soul condemned to operate one of these salt mines.

Most of the faults of the newspaper book sections are simply due to overwork, distraction, hurry, and ignorance. Works of scholarship are given purely by accident to lesser scholars in the same field who are envious and vindictive. Ichthyologists go to ichthyologists and philologists to philologists regardless, and the reviewer must be someone whose fee will be within the budget or, on the provincial papers, who is eager to air his views for nothing. The resulting malevolence is usually fortuitous. Sometimes it is deliberately sought. Then it is due to a mistaken idea of what constitutes intellectual controversy. Bergen Evans is asked to review a new edition of Fowler's book on English usage, which he has devoted his life to subverting. Democrats are set on Republicans, Stalinists are given books by Trotskyites and vice versa, and literary hates and feuds are deliberately sought out. Leslie Fiedler is assigned all books about Mark Twain, Negroes, homosexuals, or natation.

One kind of controversy all editors religiously avoid is religion—especially Roman Catholicism and Judaism. It is practically impossible to publish a review on these subjects without getting sacks of insanely abusive mail. It doesn't make any difference whether the review is pro or con. Books like Paul Blanshard's on Catholicism are dangerous to review, even unfavorably, and worse still are pro-Arab or pro-Nasser books, even travel or history. It is apparent on inspection of the outside of the envelopes that most mail of this kind comes from the mentally ill or the abysmally ignorant, but just the same it terrifies editors. Most ready-cooked controversy is just a gimmick. Sometimes, as in the case of Nelson Algren on Simone de Beauvoir, the result is hilarious, but gimmick it is nonetheless.

* * *

The oldest generation still operating in American literature started out more than 30 years ago as an unholy alliance of Southern reactionaries and convalescent Trotskyites. Nobody under 40 reads them; nobody under 30 recognizes their names, but they still dominate a sector of Ameri-

can literature even unto the third and fourth generation, like a social disease that lingers in the genes. This is one of the most remarkable logrolling and wire-pulling fraternal societies in literary history, equaled only by the proletarian *littérateurs* of the '30s, who in fact taught these boys their tricks. They still control two quarterlies (*Hudson* and *Partisan Reviews*) and one monthly (*Commentary*) absolutely, and one book-review bi-weekly (*New York Review of Books*), and it would seem that they have recently deployed their forces in one newspaper supplement (*Book Week*). This club of gentlemen and ladies of letters—which Irwin Shaw calls the “Portable Ghetto” and which Norman Podhoretz unabashedly calls “Everybody I know”—does represent a fairly consistent field of discourse, defined by memories of the sectarian politics of the years between the wars and activity in the C.I.A.-encouraged cultural-liberation organizations of the present. I have no objection to this; some of these people are amongst my best friends, but their ideas were irrelevant to begin with and today are total anachronisms besides. What is wrong with them is not their prejudices but their astonishing ignorance of anything outside the current talk of their own cocktail parties. Dwight Macdonald is incomparably the best of the lot. He is a marvelous personal journalist in the tradition of Addison and Steele or Sam Johnson, but he is now out of touch and has become a witty and fearless beater of dead dogs and batterer of open doors.

There are no people in America to compare with the omni-competent ex-Marxists who grew up in Cambridge under the influence of J. D. Bernal, or the learned Tories who write for the *Spectator* and the *Economist*. Lord Snow's objection that literary people don't know anything about parity, or how flukes learn quicker when already-taught flukes are macerated and injected into them, really no longer holds in Great Britain, but the oldest generation of American critics are amazingly ignorant of all but a very narrow range of literature itself.

This is no trivial problem of literary politics. The interposition of these people helps along the constantly increasing isolation of intellectual

America from the international community. The *New York Times Book Review* the very week I am writing this gives evidence that its editors have been leafing through the *London Times Literary Supplement* and the English weeklies. Third-hand rumors of the neo-Marxism, the movement "Back to the young Marx," which (with the drastic criticism from the Catholic left and the movement to disestablish existentialism) is one of the three most interesting intellectual currents in modern Europe—faraway rumbles of this radical criticism of post-modern society have penetrated the ascetic sanctuary of the *New York Times Book Review*. So Dr. Sidney Hook (Marx is his field) was commissioned to bring the readership up to date. (The sensible choice would have been George Steiner or George Lichtheim.) The result is a schoolmasterish lecture by Dr. Hook that is simply a rehash of the anti-Stalinist clichés of the '30s, and which misses the point completely. Dr. Hook of course is not really a survivor from the sectarian politics of the '30s; he was in those days the teacher and elder statesman of anti-Stalinism. I'm all for anti-Stalinism, but the international community has long since left behind the universe of discourse in which it is significant.

Granville Hicks, Dwight Macdonald, Edmund Wilson, men of the '20s and '30s, are still amongst our best critics, more alert than their juniors and more entertaining as writers. I suggest that one of the magazines with lots of money to spend send them abroad—all three together as a committee to turn intellectual America on to the latter half of the 20th Century. I'd be glad to provide them with a reading list, subscriptions to the important periodicals, and introductions to the personalities.

* * *

Many years ago one of the three leading-lady think-tanks of the *Vaticide Review* stayed in our house while we were off in the mountains. When we returned, the house, as my wife said, was littered with empty bottles of Old Overholt and heel-marked copies of the *Nation*. (The book-review section of the *Nation* in those days was one of that group's outlying entrenchments—it is no more.) The then young lady in question

came up to see me one afternoon, and waved her hand at my library. "What do you do with all these books?" she said. "Why, read them," I said. "You mean to tell me you've read all these books?" "Why yes," I said, "I read them all the time. This is my working library. Books I just want to read once I get for review or from the public library." On the mantelpiece were all the Greek and Latin poets in the red and green Loeb Library bindings. She clutched a bony knee and waved a bony hand at them. "You don't mean to tell me you've read all *this* stuff?" "I read it all the time," I said. "The translations are terrible but the texts are good and they are certainly prettier than the ugly Teubner Texts. I read them all the time." She asked with bated breath, "Not for pleasure?" She's become frightfully civilized since, a kind of American suffragette Sacheverell Sitwell, but her comprehension of the general ideas operating in the modern world has enlarged scarcely perceptibly.

Another anecdote. A few years ago the then literary editor of the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* came to visit me. He is one of the most civilized and universally knowledgeable men I know. His paper is the nearest there is in Sweden to a conservative organ. Students of journalism acknowledge it to be perhaps the best-edited newspaper in any language in the world. Its literary section—a large weekly supplement and at least one page daily—carries masterful reviews of the literature, both scholarly and belletristic, published currently in all the civilized languages. He had just been entertained by the editor of the largest newspaper book-review supplement in the United States. He was in a state of deeply puzzled shock. It took some time to explain to him that the book business in America is a great industry producing commodities for the market, and that a book section of a Sunday newspaper is necessarily on a par, as far as the front office is concerned, with the automobile section, the real-estate section, or the fashion pages. The fact that the American editor was himself a man of learning, taste, and breadth of view was inconsequential to the publisher of the newspaper or the publishers of the books. At that time, as a matter of fact, the editor of the automobile section of the

same paper was likewise a gentleman of letters, and the financial editor was a veritable Walter Bagehot.

* * *

Most discontented American intellectuals imagine that things are different in Europe. This is only partially true. Independent, creative, and widely knowledgeable criticism finds expression in the press only in the small countries outside the overriding pressures of the great metropoleis, in Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland. Criticism in France is rather tendentious. The French book business is a boom-or-bust gamble more comparable to Las Vegas than, like the American, to General Motors. The more vulgar press is still as venal as ever. Puffs are still bought there by the inch. The French craze for literary prizes as a method of promotion is a scandal and an absurdity. *Figaro Littéraire*, *Les Lettres Françaises*, *Le Nouvel Observateur* are essentially political organs. The criticism they print is certainly stimulating, but if you wish to form a sound opinion of current writing it's best to read all of them every week. The literary section of *L'Express* is politically motivated too, but it is probably the least tendentious of any French weekly.

The German papers differ from the American only in being, above the most popular level, written by immensely more competent individuals. German criticism is dominated by a number of quarreling establishments, but the orthodoxies that hold them together are more relevant to the contemporary world than those in America.

It is the custom to scoff at both Italian journalism and criticism. In recent years I think this has become more and more unjust. The major Italian newspapers are on a remarkably high level today and the critical writing in their literary sections compares favorably with the French.

England is a special case. It's a very solid country. It thinks it's full of class antagonism but it is as socially dense, as homogeneous as Sweden itself. Angry Young Men, the Mods and Rockers of the arts, the Cambridge Dirties and the Oxford Dirties are all quickly absorbed by the omnivorous Establishment. Before they ever come down from Oxbridge they are lunching with poetic M.P.s in the old Café Royale or the Reform Club,

whilst still in their dirty feet and linty hair. So English criticism is solid and all-forgiving. The *Times Literary Supplement*, the *Observer*, the *Guardian*, the *Spectator*, the *New Statesman* may engage in what they consider the most violent controversies. To an outsider they all seem to be saying the same thing. The solidest criticism is probably to be found in the book pages of the *Economist*.

What distinguishes British criticism is its wit and style. There are a number of specialists who publish in all the critical outlets, often under different names (reviews in the *Times* are anonymous). My first book published in England was reviewed in five different places, all by the same man, a specialist in American poetry. The one in the *Times* was faintly patronizing; the one in the *New Statesman* was favorable; the one in the *Guardian* was tolerant; the one in a left-wing Scottish nationalist paper was a rave; the one in a little avant-garde magazine was hip indeed. I thought when I met the critic that he would be embarrassed that I had found him out, but he anticipated me and told me all about it with great glee. Fifteen years later, looking over the clippings, I find it hard to tell one review from the other. This is better, for sure, than our American apostle of Higher Criticism to the cowboys of Montana who always reviews the same book, whether it's *Huckleberry Finn*, the *Memoirs of DeGaulle*, or the poems of Ferlinghetti.

There is nothing in the U.S.A. to compare with the excited dialogues that now go on in the French, Yugoslav, and Polish press. The most alert members of the intellectual community in those countries are engaged in a continuous discussion and revaluation of the new and strange social order which is overtaking us all—a drastic rebuilding of the intellectual foundations of the post-modern world. In America one must go to special-interest magazines with small circulation like *Dissent* to find anything comparable.

Neither in America nor abroad are the young who are the inheritors of this new age interested in critics. They have entered a different society in music, dress, poetry, way of life, but their attitude is, "Mr. Jones, if you don't know what's happening, nothing we can say will ever

help you and we don't want to take the trouble. Let us alone. We just want to do nice things."

* * *

It is difficult to make any suggestion as to how the situation in the United States could be improved. The first thing would be to remove book reviewing from its direct dependence on book advertising and remove the book-section editor from sales and administrative work. Neither of these things is ever likely to happen. Managing editors should be knowledgeable enough to choose competent editors instead of assigning the more delicate and unhappy occupants of the sports desk to work that they think will be more congenial. Competent editors should be able to choose competent reviewers, because they would know what they were doing. To do this they would have to pay a minimum of \$50 a column even in the provincial papers. A stringer in the next county may get this for a story about a wedding or a fire, but managing editors expect to fill up the book page for free. The result is that reviews are written by high-school English teachers and unpublishable authors.

Probably the most important thing is an

adventurous publisher and managing editor. There are excellent reviews in the *Louisville Courier*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *York, Pennsylvania, Gazette & Daily*, and in both San Francisco papers. No newspaper in Chicago, Boston, or Philadelphia compares with them. A few years ago the *Los Angeles Times* was considered a tarpit of reaction. I suppose its political policies today strive for an enlightened conservatism, but the management seems to give its literary editor free rein and he is one of the best in the country. If you can get good criticism every week in a Los Angeles newspaper, you can get it anywhere if you want to try. Another thing that's badly needed is many reliable points of reference—great gentlemen of letters. We have only one—Edmund Wilson. He may be wrong many times, but so were Sainte-Beuve and Walter Bagehot. Wilson knows and he works, and if he doesn't know he works still harder and finds out. Who else would learn Hebrew when given an assignment by the *New Yorker* to write a series on the Dead Sea Scrolls? Alas, the critics on the quarterlies say he isn't a critic at all but a journalist. So too were Huneker and Mencken.

The Editor:

Mr. Leonard was employed at the Bellevue Hospital Psychiatric Division for over 2 years. During this period, he had ample opportunity but failed to report to his supervisor, the administration, the psychiatrist in charge of the unit, or even anonymously to Box 100 of the Mayor's office, the alleged brutal behavior of personnel.

By his silence, and by his failure to make it possible to investigate and take corrective action, Mr. Leonard was guilty of assisting in perpetuating inhuman conditions of this kind, if they exist.

Mr. Leonard is either salving a guilty conscience or exaggerating the facts to achieve sensationalism. It might interest you to know that when the author was asked to document his facts by naming names, he failed to do so.

There is no question that Bellevue is overcrowded, but in the light of all the circumstances, we have serious doubts regarding the validity of a substantial amount of the facts which he lists.

Randolph A. Wyman, M.D.
Executive Hospital Administrator (Medical)
Bellevue Hospital Center
New York, New York

Frank Leonard replies:

Dr. Wyman's preoccupation with "naming names" shows that he misses one of the important points of my article, and that he would make scapegoats of attendants who are encouraged to use brutality because of inadequate staffing of the hospital.

His statement that it is impossible to take corrective action ignores entirely that portion of my article describing the dangerously unsanitary conditions at Bellevue Psychiatric.

He is incorrect when he asserts that I never reported to my superiors at Bellevue "alleged brutal behavior of personnel." This is precisely the reason I gave when I requested a transfer from the children's ward, at the very beginning of my employment at Bellevue. Dr. Wyman can find this fact recorded in my Bellevue personnel folder.

Dr. Wyman has "serious doubts" about the "validity" of my facts. Yet 11 months after the publication of my novel, *City Psychiatric* (which covers many of the events treated factually in my FACT article), Bellevue's personnel department sent a letter of reference describing me as "honest & trustworthy."

Finally, let me point out that in the last 5 years I have probably spent more hours--approximately 1500--in direct, first-hand observation of what goes on in Bellevue's psychiatric wards than has Dr. Wyman in his long career as Bellevue's superintendent.

To the Editor:

Your articles on mental health are making the rounds here (Central Islip State Mental "Hospital"). They quite literally and accurately describe the rats, slop, peeling ceilings, etc., of them ALL.

Patients of Central Islip
Central Islip, New York

MONEY IS LIFE

To a magazine, money is life. And where a magazine's money comes from usually determines what that magazine will print and what it won't print.

The vast majority of today's magazines get most of their money—7/8ths of it—from advertising. And since advertisers dislike controversy and abominate criticism, most magazines do their damndest never to offend powerful pressure groups (like religious sects or superpatriotic societies) or offend big advertisers (like the companies that sell automobiles, cigarettes, Coca-Cola, medicine, insurance, or telephone service).

FACT Magazine is an exception. Because FACT accepts no advertising (it stands virtually alone among national magazines in this respect), it is free to print articles that are both highly controversial and highly critical. And it does.

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multimillionaires evade income taxes; an account of how American newspapers hid the truth about cancer and cigarettes from the public for over 20 years; and a blistering indictment of Detroit for building cars which have needlessly cost hundreds of thousands of lives because the cars were not sufficiently "crash-worthy." (This last article has prompted rigid new Federal standards for automobile structural strength which are expected to reduce highway fatalities sharply.)

As a consequence of our refusal to accept advertising, however, we are wholly dependent upon our readers for support. And we are now appealing to each and every one of you for help. *If you do not yet subscribe to FACT, we would appreciate your doing so. If you do already subscribe, we ask that you extend your subscription for a year.*

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Personals

Kerista Comes to Chicago. For information, call Frank Brady, 528-1562 (evenings), 642-1000 (days)

Bullish Stock Broker, Pacific Northwest, seeks comely young lady as companion for world cruise. Box D-767

Matting Manufacturer, leader in its field, seeks sales representative to serve commercial, industrial, institutional fields. Arrange interview by writing Box D-666

Lady, Late 30s, committed to peace, conservation, and the amelioration of the human condition seeks man fortyish L.A. area. Box D-454

Help! Refrigerator, sink, wine-cellar overflowing. Can't cook. Need able young female. Hollywood. Box D-787

Send Personal Problem and \$2 to Personal Counsel, Box D-999

Frantically Busy Chicago Executive will provide scholarship aid for coed hereabouts. Box D-453

Willing Assistant to New England innkeeper needed. Must be congenial, hard-working, imaginative. Possibility of partnership to right type. All information to Box D-129

Medical Student, freshman, of Celtic extraction, desires patron. Boston. Box D-554

Protestant Young Lady, professional musician, seeks friendship of refined gentleman, mid-west. Box D-733

Lonely College Prof. 36, offers intellectual companionship to affable young lady. Box D-043

Bored? Send stamped self-addressed envelope to make new acquaintances. Box 1018, Mission, Kans.

Naval Officer overseas-bound invites correspondence from personable young lady. Box D-449